

A.No. 16071

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RAVI VARMA SAMSKRITA GRANDHAVALI - 33

NATYASASTRA AND NATIONAL UNITY



DR. PADMA SUBRAHMANYAM

Released during
the Golden Jubilee year
of India's Independence

**NĀṬYA SĀSTRA
&
NATIONAL UNITY**

Dr. (Miss) PADMA SUBRAHMANYAM M.A., Ph.D.

**SRI RAMAVARMA
GOVERNMENT SANSKRIT COLLEGE TRIPUNITHURA
KERALA**

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NATYASASTRA AND NATIONAL UNITY

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First Published - March 1997

Copies - 1000

Price - Rs.180/-

Distributors

The Secretary

Govt. Sanskrit College Co-operation Stores Ltd.,

Tripunithura - Kerala - Pin - 682 301

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(Former President of India)

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The Govt. Sanskrit College Committee instituted the Parikshith Memorial International lecture on Indology in 1988. The first lecture was delivered by Dr. (Mrs.) Kapila Vatsyayan (Arts of Kerala Kshetra) followed in successive years by Dr. Sheldon Pollock (1989- Future of the past), Dr. U.R. Anantha Murthy (1990- Tradition and Creativity), Dr. Sukumar Azhikode (1991- The Prakrt literature), Dr (Miss) Padma Subrahmaniam (1992- Natya Sastra and National Unity), Prof. R.S. Sharma (1993- Looking for the Aryans), Dr. Christopher Byrski (1994- Natya and Yajna) and Dr. C.D. Narasimhaih (1995- wholeness in the critical function).

This lecture, delivered in 1992 in three days to an enlightened audience, was a delightful experience. Ever since, there were enthusiastic enquiries regarding the publication of the text. It gives us enormous satisfaction to present it now. We are thankful to the author for accepting our invitation as also to Sri. Balakrishnan whose guidance we never forget. Our thanks are due to Hon'ble Sri. R. Venkataraman for gracing this volume with an illuminating introduction. We place on record our appreciations to Aagna Computers for the excellent work they have done in bringing out this volume.

The work is unique in so far as it tries, perhaps for the first time, to fill the gap between theory and practice in the field of performing arts. Her rich and varied experience as a talented artist and erudition in the classical texts coupled with the untiring spirit of enquiry gave confidence to her to take up this challenge. The various Natyasastra camps, a brief report of some of which is given in the last part, are the proclamations of her success in this field.

Dedicated to the cause of Natya the sole aim in preparing this volume, in her own words, 'is to unearth and reveal to the common man the solid pillar support of our Indian culture on which civilisational unity of many part of Asia also has been resting'. This she does first by shattering the inferiority complex instilled on the Indian psyche by foreigners and secondly by revitalising the link between *Margi* and *Desi*. The former the author tries to achieve by repudiating the two-race theory and also by pointing to the absurdity of the vedic chronology of the historians. We had the privilege of discussing the details of the Aryan theory on an earlier occasion by no less a person than Prof. R.S. Sharma (looking for the Aryans - Orient Long mann.)

With regard to the *Margi-Desi* chain the author relies on the analogy of the linguistic co-existence where in the various prakrts flourish along with Sanskrit, as seen in the Sanskrit dramas. Ever since Dr. V. Raghavan first made this suggestion, there were scholars who refuted the relevance of the analogy itself in this context.

It is accepted by all that the different Prakrts, in oneway or other, are derived from a common language. Can it be said with equal force that the multiple forms of

artistic activity manifested in different regions at various levels, too are derivatives like them ?

This doubt arises out of an analysis of the history of evolution of performing arts in India. An area often neglected in this study is the nature of Pre-Bharathan theatre. The Buddhist, Jaina and other sources provide ample proof for the existence of a popular theatre during that period. The Dighanikaya enumerates sixteen forms such as nautch dances, shows at fairs, fairy scenes, acrobating feats, boxing, wrestling, sham fights etc. Budha advises his followers to keep aloof from these recreations. The Jain works frequently mention 72 arts including music and dance. The Rayapaseniyas have mentioned 72 types of drama enacted before Lord Mahavira. Some of these are found in Natyasastra also (History of Indian theatre-Varadpande) These rustic recreation of the rural masses had their influence in Bharata as is evidenced by the treatment of *Pravrttis*. But Bharata's intention was to cull out a sophisticated form from these crude materials and hence his preference for the stylised mode of acting (*Natyadharmi*). Like Panini who refined Sanskrit from the influence of contaminated popular tongues, Bharata devised a scientific mode of acting. Hence Natyasastra can rightly be called 'The Astadhyayi' of performing arts. The rest he left to Kohala to be treated in the *Uttaratantra* which later became the source for various *uparupakas*. They mingled with the regional forms and often acted as links between the two traditions. *Margi* thus is an earlier tradition and *Desi* an addition to it. Both form part of classical tradition.

The *desis*, thus, do not embrace all the regional variations. All multiple layers of our social structure have their own forms of artistic articulation. The *Teyyam* of Kerala, for example, performed in the village Kavus before the mother goddess is the form of expression of that community.

Do this and several other forms - often described as little tradition - come under *Desi*? Even the '*ninam*' in Kutiyattam and Kathakali is certainly drawn from the folk forms. Can we call it a *Desi* derived from the Natya Sastra tradition? It is here that the analogy of linguistic distribution becomes doubtful. All the regional manifestations need not be the *derivatives* of *Margi*.

The point here is this - The search for the roots of our culture that emerged from the mist of pre-historic era and developed through ages to the present day does not always lead us to a mono-origin. There are traditions at different levels and the respective regions find expression to their aspirations through these forms. Yet, even in this plurality there is a unifying factor. The intellectual pursuit of the author is to find out, identify, and analyse that single factor. If it provokes the prevailing notions it only shows that the effort is amply rewarded.

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30-06-1996.

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FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIA

FOREWORD

Few things have given me greater pleasure than writing this foreword to Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam's brilliant treatise on "Nāṭya Sāstra and National Unity". At a time when fissiparous tendencies are becoming more and strident, and divisive forces blur the underlying string of our common heritage, a scholarly treatment of the civilisational unity of India is most welcome. A scholar in Sanskrit and Tamil Classics, with an indepth study of Nāṭya Sāstra and the several dance forms prevalent throughout the country, coupled with her own talents as a performing artiste, Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam is ideally qualified to deal with the subject.

Even from her college days, Padma has been an intellectual rebel. She never accepted the current prevailing popular views, and always wanted to delve deep into the root and genesis of issues. More than

thirty years ago, when she introduced some innovation in the traditional Bharata Nāṭyam at a performance in New Delhi, the critic wrote it was “Padma Nāṭyam” and not “Bharata Nāṭyam”. Undaunted, she pursued her course and has today blossomed into a maestro of the Science and Art of Dance forms.

Nāṭya Sāstra is regarded as the fifth Veda and Sage Bharata transmitted it to posterity as source book. It deals not merely with dance forms, but with a wide variety of subjects like theatre construction and measurements, theory of music, string, wind and percussion instruments and all aspects of dance like Bhāva and Rasa. It is both comprehensive and multi-dimensional. The author proceeds to show that the “Mārgi” style in the ancient days based on Nāṭya Sāstra was adopted and adapted with local modification in Kashmir, Kerala, Tamilnadu and other parts of the country. This whole chapter contains a wealth of information, not available in any single volume. In particular, Dr. Padma goes elaborately into the commonality of thoughts and expression in the ancient Tamil classic ‘Tōlkappiam’ and the later day ‘Silappadikāram’ and ‘Kamba Rāmayaṇam’. Describing the dance of Madhavi, Ilango says:-

நாட்டிய நன்னூல் நன்கு கடைப்பிடித்துக் காட்டினன்,
ஆதலின்.....

(It was because she danced according to the Sastras that
the Chola King awarded a title).

Dr. Padma argues that the Tamil word “Kūttu” represents dance and the use of “Nāṭṭiya Nannūl” shows that Nāṭya Sāstra was already well known in this part of the country. More positive is the reference by Kamban in the “Mithilai Paḍalam”, where the poet says:-

கைவழி நயனம் செல்லக் கண்வழி மனமும் செல்ல
ஐய நுண் இடையார் ஆடும் ஆடக அரங்கு கண்டார்

Which is a more graceful translation of the verse in
Natya Sastra namely,

यतो हस्तस्तथो दृष्टि यतो दृष्टिस्तथो मनः

It is obvious that in early times, Sanskrit was the link language throughout the vast country. How else could Adi Sankara carry his message to Kashmir, Assam and so on? It is also clear that Literature, Art and Sciences like Medicine and Astronomy, spread throughout the country by the appropriate translations from Sanskrit in the regional languages. Thus the national unity and integrity was preserved, despite language, regional diversity etc.

The Bhagavat Gita is of undetermined antiquity. Bhagavan in Chapter II V 38 advises Arjuna:

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्सि ॥

“Treating pain and pleasure, gain or loss, success or failure as the same, engage yourself in war. You will incur no sin.

One will notice that the words கரும், துக்கம், சமம், லாபம் , ஜெயம், are all current Tamil words. This proves that Sanskrit and Tamil have coalesced with each other in far antiquity. The Oxford English Dictionary contains around 900 words from Indian languages. Thus languages enrich themselves by adopting and adapting useful words and along with them valuable ideas from other languages. Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam’s treatise “Nāṭya Śāstra and National Unity” forcefully brings out this aspect.

Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam has done another yeoman service by co-ordinating the Nāṭya Śāstra and Śilpa Śāstra through her pioneering work on the Karaṇās. At the behest of His Holiness, the Mahāswāmi of Kānchi Kāmakoṭi Peetham, she has guided the erection of 108 Karaṇās in the Nataraja Temple at Satāra in Mahārashtra. It is a monumental contribution to the Nāṭya Kala itself.

With equal fervour for National Unity, she has vigorously contested the theory of Āryan invasion of India and the subtle but mischievous attempt of the erstwhile rulers to perpetuate themselves through the age old tactics of Divide and Rule. I would like to quote Dr. Padma herself:

“The first step to save ourselves from this disaster is to root out the Āryan-Dravidian race theory which has affected every branch of our culture like Religion, Philosophy, Arts, Architecture, Linguistics, Archaeology, Music, Dance, Drama and the very attitude towards each other”.

Dr. Padma has marshalled all the evidence from literature and other art forms and presented them in a cogent and convincing way. Her command of English equals her mastery over the subject- Nāṭya Sāstra, as a unifying force for all Deśi forms of arts.

This treatise of Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam is based on her Parikshit Memorial Lecture, delivered in 1992 at the Government Sanskrit College, Tripunithura, Kerala. This College which has a hoary past, having been established by His Highness the Mahārāja of Cochin in 1914, has now developed into an institution in the

forefront of Sanskrit studies in Nyāya, Vyākaraṇa, Sāhitya and Vedānta with over 700 students on the rolls. It is under the fostering care of its erudite scholar and Principal Sri K.G. Paulose, emphasising that language transcends race, religion, caste or creed.

I am sure that this work will remain forever a source book of knowledge.

R. VENKATARAMAN

प्रस्तावना

सरस्वत्याः निवासभूते अस्मिन् महाविद्यालये बहवः विद्वांसः, श्रेष्ठाः, विद्यां प्राप्य विराजमानाः सन्ति । महामेधाविनां दर्शनकलानिधि श्री परीक्षित महाराजानां स्मारक भाषण परम्परायां एतावता महतां शास्त्रज्ञानां पण्डितानां एव समावेशः आसीत् । अहं मन्ये, अत्र कलानिपुणस्य इदानीमेव प्रथमं समावेश इति । अहं संस्कृते न अतीव पण्डिता, यद्यपि नाट्यकलायां प्रावीण्यं अस्ति । अतः मम अत्र भाषणार्थं आह्वानं मदीय भाग्यात् लब्धं इति चिन्तयामि । किन्तु चेन्नपुरी नगरे संस्कृत महाविद्यालयस्य स्थापकानां श्री कृष्णस्वामि महोदयानां प्रपौत्रीत्वं, वाग्येयकारीणां श्रीमति मीनाक्षी सुब्रह्मण्यं महोदयाः पुत्रीत्वं च मया दैवात् लब्धं, इत्यस्ति मम अर्हता । अहं इदानीं अस्मिन् भाषणसन्दर्भे, मम नाट्यविमर्शे मार्गदर्शकानां पद्मभूषण् डा. टी. एन्. रामचन्द्रन् महोदयानां संस्मरणं करोमि ।

पञ्चमवेदस्य नाट्यशास्त्रस्य विरचयितृणां भरतमुनीनां, तत् व्याख्यातृणां अभिनवगुप्ताचार्याणां, तत् परम्परागतानां अन्येषां च आचार्याणां चरणेषु साञ्जलिबन्धं प्रणमामि । नाट्यशास्त्रोक्तानां नियमानां तत्प्रयोगाणां च मध्ये बहोः कालात् विद्यमानं असम्बन्धं दूरीकर्तुं एव मम सार्वदिकः प्रयासः । अस्मिन् विषये प्रत्यक्षदेवानां काञ्ची श्रीचरणानां श्री चन्द्रशेखरेन्द्र सरस्वतीनां अत्यन्त अनुग्रहेण साफल्यमपि मया प्राप्तं इति कृतज्ञता पूर्वकं वन्दनं तेभ्यः जगद्गुरुभ्यः समर्पयामि । नियम प्रयोगयोः ऐक्यदृष्ट्या नाट्यशास्त्रस्य लक्षण लक्ष्याणां मार्ग विधान संपदा पर्यालोचने मम इदं प्रत्यक्षं भासते - भारते सर्वेषां भारतीयानां सांस्कृतिकी एकता शोभते इति । इममेव विषयमधिकृत्य अहं अत्र भाषणत्रयं कर्तुं उत्सहे ।

त्रिपूणितुरा

पद्म सुब्रह्मण्यम्

११-१०-१९९२

PREFACE

It was a privilege to have been invited by Sri Ramavarma Govt.Sanskrit College at Tripunithura to deliver the Parikshit Memorial Lectures in 1992. The subject of my choice was “Nāṭya Sāstra and National Unity” and this book is the outcome of those deliberations. This college has a hoary tradition of housing and developing knowledge and has been shining like a beacon light for about eight decades. Samskrta is a common mother of not only our Indian civilisation, but it stands testimony for the mono origin of human evolution. That the status of the Head of this Institution has been entrusted on the worthy strong shoulders of Prof. K.G Paulose is a proof of the relevance and right of learning Samskrta, irrespective of religious and other narrow boundaries. The high degree of culture that Kerala enjoys is due to the Samskrta education which has always been open to all at all levels. One of the pioneers in re-popularising this linguistic legacy was the ruler of Cochin, His highness Ramavarma Parikshit Maharaja. Appreciating his service to education and culture, the sage of this century, Pūjyaśri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati

Swamigal, the 68th Śāṅkarāchārya of the illustrious Kāñchi Kāmakoti Pīṭham conferred on him the coveted title, "Darśana Kalānidhi" on 4th December, 1948. It is not out of place to re-capitulate that event summarising what is described in the detailed biography of His Holiness written by Sambamurthy Sastrigal (in Tamizh).

As early as 1928, when His Holiness toured Kerala, he marked the young Prince as a genius. In 1948, soon after he ascended the throne, Pūjyaśrī Paramāchārya sent his representatives with the citation and other relevant insignia of the Award to be presented in a colourful ceremony. Both the citation and the Maharāja's reply were in Samskrta. The citation included the following:

"After your having mastered Nṛyāya, Vaisēśika and other Darśanas, your efforts to foster such education by way of setting up colleges, conducting seminars and patronising pandits to protect Sāstras, classified by Rishis is commendable. Your interpretations are appreciated even by the learned. We pray to Sri Chandramouliswara for your welfare and bless you with the title, "Darśana Kalānidhi".

Maharaja's graceful reply was full of humility,

characteristic of true merit. The gist of it was as follows:

"I bow to the feet of the Holiness which are the very ocean of compassion. Just like Ādi Śāṅkara, our Jagadguru has taken upon himself all the austerities for the sake of the people. In ancient history, it is usual to come across kings who surrendered at the feet of saints whose wealth was prayer, so as to remove sorrow from the world. In our own times, despite scientific and economic progress, people continue to suffer greater tragedy. I hope that the people of my "Samsthan" who are guided by wise ministers, will be blessed by Pūjyaśrī Āchārya for their welfare. I am at a loss to find suitable vocabulary to convey my profound gratitude for this honour bestowed on me".

It was indeed a blessing for me to be the first performing artiste to deliver the Parikshit Memorial Lectures and that too in the august presence of great revered stalwarts like Sri Narayana Pisharodi who had translated the whole of "Nāṭya Sāstra" into Malayalam three decades ago, Prof. Ramachandra Iyer who was the Principal of this college when the present Principal, Prof. Paulose was a student here, and Dr. Kunjunni Raja. My thought go back to my ancestor, Hon'ble Justice Sri V. Krishnaswamy Iyer, the Founder of the Madras

Sanskrit College and my mother Smt. Meenakshi Subrahmanyam who had composed about 400 “kritis” in Samskrta, as well as my Guru in research Padma Bhushan Dr. T.N. Ramachandran from all of whom I seem to have inherited my love for Samskrta and Indology as a whole. I owe my nationalistic outlook and a broader vision of the world to my father, Film Director K. Subrahamanyam who was a freedom fighter and a paternity in the cultural world. The deep rooted conviction in the very philosophy of aesthetics is blessing endowed on me through the benign grace of His Holiness, the Mahāswami of Kāñchi. I cannot dismiss my life time commitment to the study of Nāṭya Sāstra as a mere coincidence. I continue to bow to Bharata-perhaps as I did in my previous birth-for, he is the Ādi Guru who transmitted the fifth Vēda as a tangible source book. My goal in life has been to bridge the gap between theory and practice that had existed in the past centuries. This meditative perception for over three decades has not gone waste. It has, apart from technical intricacies, revealed the common cultural ethos of Bhārata Varsha. The following pages are meant to highlight this unity which has been immanent for thousands of years. The mono origin of civilization

from the Vedic source, as explained by Pūjyaśrī Mahāswāmi of Kāñchi, give us a cosmic awareness. It is this holistic view of culture that can help us to relieve ourselves from the shackles of narrow minded limitations. Irrespective of how my work is viewed today, I cannot help feeling an immense sense of participation in history. It has been proved by others that racially, linguistically, morally, ethically, religiously and spiritually, the Indian sub-continent has been one unit. This little volume has a single purpose, namely to unearth and reveal to the common man, the solid single pillar support of our Indian culture, on which the CIVILISATIONAL UNITY of many other parts of Asia has also been resting.

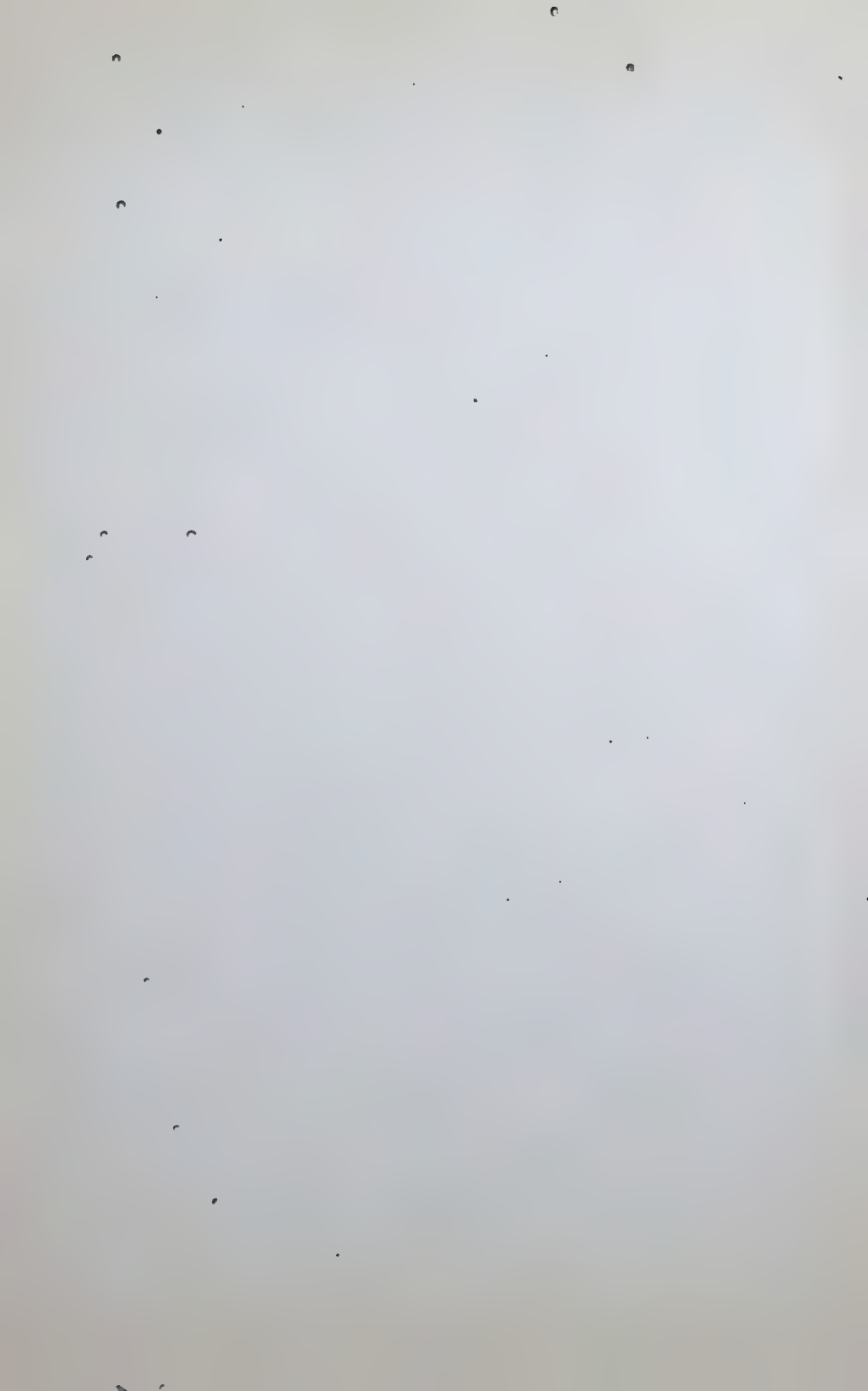
I heartily thank the Sanskrit College, Tripunithura and its dynamic Principal Dr. Paulose for publishing my lectures in this book form. I gratefully acknowledge my disciples Rajalakshmi and Janaki (my scribes) and Gayatri Kannan (proof reader-Sanskrit). I thank my disciple Skandakumar, my nephew B. Kannan and my brother V. Balakrishna who fed the manuscript into the computer. I thank Kannan for adding the Sanskrit and Tamil types, diacritical marks as well as properly paging the material. I owe my very way of life to my

brother Balakrishnan and his wife Shyamala, for there is nothing that I can achieve without their loving co-operation and guidance.

PADMA SUBRAHMANYAM

Kāli 5097, Māgha Māsā, 6th day

Madras January 26, 1996.



CHAPTER - 1

INDIA

AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE FOR UNITY

The 40th Anniversary of Indian Independence and the Birth Centenary of Pandit Jawarharlal Nehru were the events to be planned at a high level meeting in Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi when the then President of India, His excellency Sri R. Venkataraman, the then Vice-President Hon'ble Sri. Shankar Dayal Sharma and the then Prime Minister, Hon'ble Sri. Rajiv Gandhi were present. When I was asked to voice out ideas from a cultural angle, I gave three suggestions. The first fructified; the second diplomatically overrun, of course with pleasant smiles; the third - though approved, did not materialise. The three suggestions were :

1. Revive and popularise Nāṭya Sāstra to create an awareness about the common cultural ethos of our Sub-Continent.

This was approved and Sri. Rajiv Gandhi immediately responded by asking me to conceptualise a 13 episode Tele-Film Serial titled *Bhāratiya Nāṭya Sāstra*. He wanted “this message of oneness to reach every nook and corner of our country”. The Tele-film Serial was produced by our *Nrithyodaya* and directed by my brother V. Balakrishnan. I handled the script, music and choreography and also personally appeared for presentation. It was acclaimed as a “Magnum Opus” by both the lay and learned.

2. Connecting all the major rivers of India.

I quoted a mantra which enables a psychic unification of this sub-continent through invoking the waters of Ganga, Yamuna, *Gōḍāvari*, Saraswathi, Narmada, Sindhu and *Kāvēri* into a small pot of water meant for daily worship. Though generally the members applauded me, this idea was dropped (for obvious political reasons) as it was a delicate issue.

3. Re-Write Indian History from the Indian point of view to revitalise the common self esteem and the common Indian psych.

A seminar was only dreamt of, but it was not turned into a reality. This chapter is devoted to this suggestion of mine.

One must remember that the history of the culture of a land and its political Chronology are inter-related. Mere listing of dynasties cannot register human evolution. A distortion of historic facts have deep psychological effects on the collective cognisance of future generations. This can be quite harmful for every aspect of life and knowledge, as we are experiencing today in our country.

Even the acceptance of a common manual on performing arts has been like swimming against cross currents for me. For example, when I wrote and spoke about the Kashmirian links with the Nāṭya Sāstra. I was dubbed as a traitor to Tamil cause. At the heights of this controversy when I was being attacked by a small group of Tamil fanatics, I was called and personally encouraged by the most dynamic former Prime Minister and the loving mother of our generation Smt. Indira Gadhi. **Why should a normal cultural or academic activity be sensationalised ?**

To quote another incident, when a group of Indian artistes landed at Mauritius for the Ocean Festival, I was an eye witness to the Director of one of the Zonal Cultural Centres standing at the tarmac and instructing the local people to garland only the artistes from North

India. I must mention here that Late Sri. Durga Lal, the great Kathak artiste walked away with me in protest. I had even sent a confidential report to the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) on this shabby incident on a foreign soil. **Why should such attitudes be found even at the official level ?**

To quote yet another incident, when I told a responsible organisation in Madras that I found direct links with the Manipuri Tālās and the ancient Tamil hymns called Tiruppugazh, and requested them to invite the Manipuri artistes for a comparative demonstration, the counter question was put to me “will the Manipuri artistes proclaim that the technique originated from Tamilnadu ?” I could not convince them that if we have similarities it is because of the inherent oneness of the cultural ethos of Bharat. **Why should this mental block remain between the linguistic and ethnic groups ?**

I have found the answer. The root cause is our learning the distorted history of our country, as created by the Europeans to divide us. The two race theory, the Āryan invasion theory and the limiting of India's antiquity are all seen perpetuated in our text books even today. Re-writing our history from the traditional Indian point

of view, with the help of deep rooted knowledge in primary sources alone can revitalise the much dwindled common Indian psych and common grammar offered by the Nāṭya Sāstra accepted in the field of performing arts.

India-after nearly half a century of enjoying political freedom, is yet to regain her intellectual freedom. We are still slaves of the British and Western thoughts about ourselves, inflicted into our land from the 18th century as part of a concerted effort in uprooting our self esteem and unity. It is unfortunate that no remedy has been thought of in the post independence period for this malady. When we think of the contribution of the cultural world for the well being of our Nation, we need to look at culture from a holistic angle. Culture is not mere dance, music, drama, painting, sculpture or a bundle of books. It is the sum total of every facet of life, including how we live, why we live, and what we leave when we don't live. Where do I come from? Who am I? Where do I go? What do I do? How do I do? What is my relationship with the entire creation? - are all basic questions for which answers were taught in the traditional sense of learning or education. This was the foundation on which every facet of culture including

all arts and science was built. This approach to education gave self confidence with humility and induced conviction for character.

All the guilds belonging to every walk of life were functioning as beautiful counter-points of polyphonic music, enriching the totality of life experience in harmony. There was no high or low, superior, middle or inferior; each had a role to play in the total theatre of life with perfect understanding and team spirit. That was the dignity of labour, in traditional Hindu society, with recognition of merit in each field. Each guild took upon themselves their profession as a respectable public commitment and carried themselves with great honour and dignity. Each guild proclaimed its vocation as the best and equated work with worship. In a dance drama written about 250 years ago, a fortune - telling Gypsy tribal girl introduces her self as belonging to the Kurava tribe which she claims as the best community in the world and boasts of her professional acumen. Tiruvalluvar in his Tirukkural gives the highest pedestal of honour to the farmer who tills the soil, and declares the others as subservient. Today, every ethnic group feels infradig and prefers to be branded as backward, claiming all sympathy and help. Earlier, no

tribe or community liked to be considered as backward; but why should this psychological self-dishonouring be encouraged, inferiority complex fanned and common self esteem buried in almost every caste or guild? This needs careful collective psychic treatment. Only when they are all made to feel as equals, India will truly start marching forward with greater self confidence.

The inferiority complex of most Indians has unfortunately become part of the present Indian culture, well exploited by those who have vested interests. The shaken selfesteem leads to envy, distraction, dejection and dissatisfaction about one's own profession. Our society will soon be bereft of not only scavengers, but also drivers, farmers, gardeners, cooks and even stenographers. Our country will be full of only political leaders or film stars, thus only Rajas and no Prajas, and only Kalakars and no Rasikas. Of course Doctors and Engineers will be there, for, only they are paid the highest dowry. It is unfortunate that there is a tendency for easy life, expectation of quick results and shunning duty, all these marking our National Character today. How can we build our Nation with such inferior attitudes, topped by selfishness and incapacity and all these leading to a collectively doubtful integrity? Indiscipline is neither a sign of freedom nor equality

is identity.

Why is this decline in the moral fibre of our Nation? Can this disease be cured? Respectability has to be gained through inherent qualities and not by demand. For this, is self respect not the foremost necessity? How did India loose self esteem? With utter self pity on one side, the psychic wishes to shamelessly promote oneself through declaring one's inferiority in intellectual or executive faculties, there is nothing but injustice done to the building up of the Nation. Waters in various temperatures like that in boiling point or zero degree centigrade or cool water or warm water, have all got a specific purpose. Though they are all chemically described as H_2O mixing all the waters of varying degrees of temperature results in making the entire water useless. This is what is happening in our society which is full of complex due to lack of self esteem and self satisfaction in the respective fields of work. The education has been creating sellers of profession and not devotees of work.

The lack of common self esteem is also responsible for undue adoration for anything alien and loss of values for Indian heritage. Indian culture cannot survive at this rate when we have not taught our generations to value Indian concepts of Beauty and Truth, Faiths and Fellowships

and in short the Indian concept of refinement for which there is a single word known as “Ārya”. The whole problem seems to have the basis in the word having been maliciously misinterpreted for about 200 years, causing the cancer of disintegration. If the ethnic problem continues today inspite of education, one must rethink about the education that is being imparted. Where exactly is this demon hiding? It is nowhere else but in our history books, which are shamelessly and most faithfully following the British colonial version of our past. Our history has been written in the last 200 years to divide us by diminishing our antiquity and self esteem. The conspiracy for intellectual subjugation has been so successful that the imprint of its scar has still not been soothened. Unless we create an awareness about the oneness in variety that has been immanent in this sub-continent from proto-historic times, the psychological gap between the peoples of India will be perpetuated forever. The first step to save ourselves from this disaster is to root out the Āryan Dravidian race theory, which has affected every branch of our culture like religion, philosophy, art, architecture, linguistics, archaeology, literature, music, dance, drama and the very attitude towards each other.

The word “Ārya” according to Amarakōśa - the standard

ancient lexican - is explained as on who hails from a noble family, of gentle behaviour and demeanor, good natured and of righteous conduct. According to Manu- the law giver- people of all Nationalities could be Ārya or Anārya (Non- Ārya) depending upon their conduct. The Samskrta term Ārya has its Prākṛit counterpart “Ayya” in Tamil and other languages.

Draviḍa on the contrary is a term which denoted a geographic region which included Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra and Draviḍa (Tamilnadu). Likewise, the Gauḍas were Sāraswata, Kanyākubja, Mythila, Utkala and Gauḍa. The Bhāratavarsha was divided into two halves as Gauḍa Déśa and Draviḍa Déśa with five ethnic groups in each geographic division. “Ārya” in the qualitative sense could mean any cultured man from any part of India or even other parts of the world. These two words of different concepts were branded as names of two races by the Europeans. This theory has no base in traditional Indian learning. The Āryan- Draviḍian race theory has created new subjects like Āryan and Draviḍian grammar. Sri. K.S. Srinivasan, a Fellow of the Nehru Foundation, has shown how the syntax is practically the same for all the Indian languages. The race theory is responsible for both, the separatist Draviḍian movement as well as the anti-South ultra

fanatic tendencies in North India.

ORIGIN OF THE TWO-RACE THEORY

Let us take a quick look into the origin of the false theory which has been proved as baseless, unscientific and worthy of no credence by both Indian and foreign scholars. The recent book (1987) "Black Athena-The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization" of Martin Bernal - a historian in England - is a swashbuckling foray into the very heart of racist, Europocentric historiography. He has traced how the status of Egypt fell with the rise of racial anti-Semitism in 1880s and collapsed with the peak between 1917 and 1939. The indigenous Greek tradition and their ancient literature acknowledge Egyptians and Phoenicians for their mixed culture. Paradoxically, the more the 19th century admired the Greek, the less it respected the writing of their own history.

This has its own parallel in India, for the, more admiration Samskrta enjoyed in Europe, the primary sources of our history were less adhered to and even distorted to suit their needs. The rightful place of Phoenicians and Egyptians in the Proto-history of Greece was suppressed; the reasons are clearly explained by Bernal with tremendous

historic evidence. Consciously or unconsciously the European thinkers saw the Phoenicians as the Jews of antiquity - as clever Semetic traders. The Christian Europe neither wanted a historic identity of their ancestry with Judaism; nor did they want to reconcile that Egypt- being the land of blacks - could be the father of the Greek civilisation and therefore, that of the European culture as well. It was at this juncture that Sir William Jones brought out his English translation of important Samskrta works. The true admiration for Samskrta among the Europeans was made use of, those with vested interests, for political and religious benefits. Thus, an Āryan story was fabricated, affecting the facts of true origin of Greek civilization on one side, and the history of India on the other.

The Indo-Āryan linguistic theory was soon turned into a race theory. The Āryans were said to have entered Greece from the North; the fiction of the Āryan invasion of India was also construed. The term "Indo-Āryan" was even declared Indo-Germanic, for, the white German Christians were proclaimed as the purest descendents of the Āryan race. The theory at that time was that the Āryans came down from the high mountains of Asia and colonised Europe.

The Āryan distortion in India is very lucidly epitomised by Navaratna S. Rajaram in his crystal clear lecture. He has quoted many Indian and foreign scholars and proved the invalidity of this theory. He has explained how this theory has its origin in the 18th century in Europe, but received full development only in the 19th century. It seemed to strike no one as odd- at least at that time - that this supposed invasion by light skinned people, happened to be an exact replay of the contemporary European experience in colonising Asia and Africa. Substituting European for Āryan and Asian or African for Dravidian will give us a description of any of the numerous European colonial campaigns in Asia and Africa of that time. Recent research by L.Poliakov as quoted by Rajaram and others has shown that the notion of Āryans as an invading group has its origin in Europe stemming from the efforts of Europeans to give themselves an identity that was free from the taint of Judaism. So, we can see how the reasons are same as given by Bernal in the case of Egyptian history. Though without Judaism there is no Christianity, to free themselves from their Jewish connection, the Christian Europe of 18th century looked to the East and particularly to India. The American anthropologist Jim Shaffer

notes that many scholars drew analogies between the philosophies of India and the West in order to separate Western Europe from Judaic heritage. The perversion of the Samskrta word Ārya can be traced to this period. Hitler was perhaps truly misled that this Āryan ancestry was the heritage of only a section of the white Christian race. According to this theory, Poliakov notes how the Āryans were said to have descended from the mountains of Asia to colonise and populate the West.

This is most ironical, for the original theory seems to be the Āryan invasion of Europe! The story then changed, got modified, adding insults to injury and on the whole continues to misguide scholarship. East India Company was prepared to fund Max Müller of Germany to the tune of One Lakh Rupees or Ten Thousand Pounds in 1854, to translate the Rg Veda in such a manner that it would destroy the belief of the Hindus in the Vedic religion. It was he who was responsible for the fiction of the Āryan invasion, as well as the absurdly late Vedic chronology, dating Vedas to 1200 BC. His colleague Golstucker observed that Max Muller's Vedic chronology was based on his Biblical belief that "the world was created on 23rd October, 4004 BC".

V.G. Ramachandran in his "Date of Sankara" has

quoted Cunningham's letter to his boss suggesting the necessity of an intellectual invasion of India and the restriction of her antiquity to suit Greek chronology. This was definitely a part of the programme to diminish Indian self esteem. Macaulay (1800-1859) was responsible for the modern English schools in India. Rajaram quotes Macaulay's letter to his father thus - "it is my belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal in 30 years". Max Mueller who lived in London for his project wrote to his wife about his translation of the Rg Veda in 1866 as follows - "This edition of mine and the translation of Vedas will hereafter tell to a great extent on the fate of India and on the growth of millions of souls in that country. It is the root of their religion and to show them what the root is, I feel sure, is the only way of uprooting all that has sprung from it during the last three thousand years'. But Max Mueller himself changed his views from 1871 and finally wrote the following in 1888 - "I have declared again and again that if I say Āryan, I mean neither blood or bones, nor skull or hair; I mean simply those who speak the Āryan language". The reasons for this somersault of Max Mueller is analysed by Rajaram very convincingly with

historicity as background.

The Britishers were keen on an intellectual invasion of India through dividing the people and restricting the antiquity. Declaring Samskrta as a dead language was also part of this scheme. This great language was a binding force from very remote times, and weakening this linguistic link was achieved through the two-race theory, followed, by Bishop Caldwell writing a new grammar for Dravidian languages. Before the second edition of Caldwell's book appeared in 1875, there was a study on the comparative grammar of the Āryan languages by John Beames. The fact is that both Caldwell and Beames were not exposed to Indian languages as a whole. Philologists who have grown up on the Āryan- Dravidian race theory would do well by taking a closer look at the link existing between Tamil and Prākṛt.

K.S. Srinivasan, in his book, "The Ethos of Indian literature", clearly states that the structure of all Indian Languages and their syntax are alike. In this context, should we not rejoice by noticing the parallels between "Tirukkural" and "Nitisāra" or "Tolkāppiam" and "Natya Sāstra", or equally so by noting the phenomenon of the ancient Tamil classics being set in sciences in the

North -Malva, Magadha, Bengal and Punjab - and making references to artistes of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Avanti ?

It is said that Samskrta is a language that was developed through the intellectual exercise of the Rshis and hence the name "Samskrta" - meaning well refined. It is well known that this classical language was developed through a holistic influence of the Vedic language as well as the rich. Prākṛts. Among the regional Prākṛits which have affinity with Samskrta, ancient works mention the Draviḍi Prākṛt. Is it out of place to consider Tamil as a Draviḍi Prākṛt, which according to some foreign scholars is a dead language? In fact, Rajendralal Mitra, a philologist of late 19th century did use the term Draviḍi Prākṛt to denote Tamil. Mitra was not alone. Even Pūjyaśrī Chandrasēkharēndra Saraswati Swamigal, Jagadguru Śankarācārya of Kānci Kāmakōti Piṭham, has suggested that the term Draviḍi Prākṛt would mean the Tamil language. He not only explains the concept of Pañca Draviḍa and Pañca Gauḍa as seen in traditional literature, but also points out that the word Draviḍa itself is Samskrta. Swaminathā Iyer - the philologist and T.V. Mahalingam - the archaeologist, have also shown the link between Tamil and Prākṛt.

Hence, will it be out of place to take up a study of Tamil language as one more Prākṛt and examine its connection with other Prākṛts such as Mahārāṣṭṛi, Saurasēni and Māgadhi? It is interesting to note that Mahārāṣṭṛi which is said to be a Prākṛt of Samskrta was spoken in a region which is geographically classified under that of the Pañca Draviḍa.

The older Tamil grantha script which contained all the letters to write the entire “ka-vargam”, “ca-vargam” etc., (like Samskrta), was simplified and changed in the name of facilitating printing. If one had retained the older Tamil grantha, we could have even had a common script for the entire South India and perhaps, this would have extended even up to Indonesia. After all, the Brāhmi was a common script for the whole of Bhāratavarsha till the early Christian era. Perhaps, all our Tamil Sangam works were written only in this script. What an Utopian ideal it would be even to dream of reviving this common script for the whole of our country.

It is said to state that the North-South divide has come to stay in every aspect of culture and in the very core of the minds of the people who have been brain-washed through our history books - product of the British colonial version of our past, tailored to divide and rule us. The

poison of the Āryan-Dravidian race theory has infected every branch of the cultural and the academic world. Our history books are still stating that the Āryans invaded India and pushed the Dravidians down South. The theory did not leave aside even the Hindu religion unaffected. Śiva was branded as the Dravidian God inspite of his Himalayan home and Brahma as Āryan God. The Brahmin community all over India is thought of as the descendents of the malicious Āryans who came through the Khyber Pass. Look at the plight of this community today - in South they are treated as alien Āryans and in the North, the South Indian Brahmins are referred to as Madrasis - a common term used for anybody coming from South of Vindhya. If this nation is destined to disintegrate, it will not be due to religious fights, but more probably due to the North - South Divide which has penetrated as the grass root level in the 200 years; thanks to the two-race theory.

In the post-independence India we have more often come across historians who were not rooted in our primary sources, with a deep knowledge of our indigenous scriptures, languages, customs and their significance. Having been soaked in the inflicted theories for 200 years, even well known historians like Romila Thapar

refused to believe that India was the home of the Āryans and doubted that such notions are meant to enforce class inequality. In all earnestness, her apprehension was that the next step can be to move from indigenous origin of the Āryans to propagating the notion of an Āryan Nation. Yes! This is precisely what we must aim at. If one understands the meaning of Ārya as being refined and cultured, there is nothing wrong in aiming at making our nation an Āryan nation. It is heartening to note from a review of the book "Recent Perspectives of Early Indian History" edited by Romila Thapar, that she declares that archaeological evidence does not point to Āryan invasion. But she is left with the anomaly of explaining the presence of Samskrta in India. She argues that the Āryan is identified now not by race but by language. If only historians can care for some inter-disciplinary approach in understanding the sum total of our heritage, the presence of Samskrta in India would be understood as how a child would understand the mother tongue. For this, the first step would be to feel like a child of India.

This land of ours is referred to as Āryavarta in our scriptures, meaning the home of Āryans or cultured people. Pagve who wrote the History of India in Marathi (20 volumes) in the last century opposed the race theory

and invasion fiction, with a background of internal evidence from our scriptures. He has proved beyond doubt in his “Āryavarta - The Home of Āryans” that the Indians are the sons of the soil, based on a study of the Rg Veda. From Vedic references, he has also shown that the Zoroastrians of Iran were originally from India, for, Sage Viswāmitra laments on their leaving the native soil. Pagve also quotes the First Geological Report of India which declares that the Āravalli range is Pre-Cambrian in age and hence one of the first regions of our planet where fertility was possible.

Avinash Chandra Das, another scholar of early this century interpreted the verses from Rg Veda from a geological point of view and concluded that some of these verses must have been in vogue in 25000 BC, when the river Saraswati had not dried up and when the sea had divided the Southern peninsula from the North. His books “Rg Vedic India” and “Rg Vedic Culture” were meticulously suppressed in the academic stream. Such books need to be reprinted and popularised today. Incidentally, Das identifies the Phonecians as the Phanis referred to in Rg Veda, as those who sailed away to far off lands. We have already seen that according to Bernal, the Phonecians and the Egyptians

were responsible for the development of Greek culture. All these lead us to believe in the mono-origin of civilisations.

Swami Vivekananda and even Dr. Ambedkar opposed the two-race theory. The latter said that the right place for this theory is the dust bin. In the fifties; Kota Venkatachalam wrote the book "Plot in Indian Chronology" and proved how 12000 years of true history of India was swallowed by the Westerners to undermine our antiquity. Recent research has proved beyond doubt that the real date of Buddha is 1800 BC, the real date of Ādi Sankara is 509 BC, and Alexander's coming to India was during the Gupta age and not during that of the Maurya. The details are beyond the purview of this book. Many such revelations are shocking, but convincing as well as inspiring for swelling the national pride and self esteem. The above summary of the history of the distortion of our history, is given here for the simple reason that the acceptance of a single common manual for performing arts needs a clarification of facts of history so that the psychological block is shattered.

PERFORMING ARTS - A HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

In the field of performing arts, the grammatical foundation

laid down by Bharatamuni in his Nāṭya Sāstra has been a unifying force, termed as “Mārgi”, while the regional interpretations and artistic manifestations were termed as “Deśi”. Like how Samskrta and the Prākṛts co-existed, the Mārgi and the respective Deśis has co-existed enriching each other. The postindependence period has witnessed the revival of the respective Deśis. The same can be applied in the linguistic fields as well. The respective Prākṛts have attained their rightful attention.

In the last half a century, many of our regional dance styles, musical forms and dramatic presentations have been revived from oblivion. Even in the pre-independence India, we heard of a revival of Bharata Nāṭyam, Kathakali, Kathak and Manipuri. The First All India Seminar on Dance held at the Sangeet Natak Akademi, had views like renaming Kathak as Bharata Nritya for technical reasons. This implies that the Kathak also has a mother in Bharata’s Nāṭya Sāstra. Incidentally, I have chosen this term “Bharata Nrityam” to denote my reconstruction of the technique of Nāṭya Sāstra. Recent decades saw the development and popularisation of other regional forms like the Odissi, Chau, Sattriya and others. All these have once upon a time been referred to as the respective Deśi

ie., regional forms. They all had a common grammatical foundation called the Mārgi, meaning the path shown by Bhārata, the author of the earliest extant text on performing arts and poetics. Like how Samskrta co-existed with all the rich Prākrtis (including the Draviḍi Prākrt which itself is considered as Tamil by some scholars), the Mārgi co-existed with all the Deśis, as a common Rāshtriya Lakshana (theoretical base) for respective Lakshya (practise). “Lakshana Lakshya Viruddha” ie., discrepancy between theory and practice started developing from the 12th century in the North and the 14th century in the South.

Generally, there is a misconception that South India was blessed not to lose her cultural and religious heritage at any part of history and hence has the pride of preserving every aspect of ancient arts and customs. Though it did not suffer as much as Kashmir, Gujarat and other parts of North India, the Southern peninsula had its own misfortunes, experiencing interruptions in the continuity of cultural traditions. The performing arts and other aspects of refined living depend on the political, economic and social stability of the country. From early 14th century, the South underwent constant confusions with wars and struggles for religious

interests. The Cōzha and Pāndya dynasties were on the verge of termination. In 1311 AD, Allaudin Khilji's chieftain, Malik Kafur plundered the temples of Tamizhnādu and carried back enormous booty. In 1318, Kuzru Khan reenacted this "jihad" and walked away after destroying many temples. In 1318, the Sultanate of Madurai was established. Literary sources of historic values, like the Pāndhyan chronicles, "Kōil Ozhugu", "Mathura Vijayam" (by Queen Ganga Devi), writing of Ibn Batuta the contemporaneous Muhammedan chronicler and enormous epigraphical records tally with each other and paint the pictures of the destructive deeds of the Muslim invaders, causing irretrievable damage and even closure of temples, thus affecting the very way of life of the Hindus.

In 1336, Swami Vidyaranya, who re-established the Sringeri Sankarāchārya Māṭha, founded the Vijayanagara dynasty in Karnatak with a view of reviving not only the Hindu kingdom, but to resurrect the multifarious facets of Hindu culture. He has himself written a work on Sangita. He chose the brothers Harihara and Bukka, the relatives of the Hoysala king, as the first rulers of the Vijayanagar kingdom. Bukka's son, Kumara Kampana is to be ever gratefully remembered by lovers of ancient

arts and culture for his untiring efforts in reviving traditional values in the whole of South India. He put an end to the Muhammedan rule at Madurai in 1371. Both N. Sethuraman in his "Pāndyan Varalāru" and Dr. A. Krishnaswamy in his "The Tamil Country under Vijayanagar" give us graphic descriptions of the thrilling events of the period. Among the many temples badly affected, the four major temples of the Tamizh country, namely those at Chidambaram, Tiruvānaikka, Srirangam and Madurai were in shambles. Ranganatha Swami was bereft of roof. Of course the deities (the Utsava Vighras) were secretly taken away to places of safety. When Kampana re-opened Madurai temple, he broke open the secret chamber where the main deity was hidden; the royal devotee was moved by the sight of the deity, anointed with sandal paste, still looking fresh after nearly half a century of quarantine.

The state of performing arts during those fifty years can be clearly seen from an inscription obtained from Tirukalakudi near Madurai. From this, it is obvious that the Deva Dāna lands endowed to the temples were also taxed. The possession of the lands changed hands to the tenants to the detriments of the temples income and consequently to the rituals. When such was the basic

problem in maintaining the temples, where is the question of adding dance or music to the rituals? Fifty years of total disruption in cultural activities was more than enough for loosing link not only with the “Mārgi” but perhaps even the “Dēśi “..... at this juncture, Kampana Udayar came (on his southern campaign), destroyed the “tulukkan”, established orderly government through out the country and appointed many chiefs (Nayakkanmār) for inspection and supervision in order that the worship in all temples might be revived regularly as of old”. It is further stated that some dancing girls of the temple (Dēvaraḍiyār) died, some became very poor and many were ready to migrate to other distant places. Consequently, with a view to keep up the original status of the temple, the temple land which was enjoyed as “kaniyāṭchi” by a certain Narasinga a Dēvar was now sold to another person, the former having died without leaving any heir, in order to maintain ten temple dancing girls, giving them food, betel leaf, cloth and houses in the street “Pāvanangakāran Thiru Veedi “.....” (A.R.E. Tirukalakudi, Ramanathapura - No:64, 1916).

Dr. A. Krishnaswamy has given details of how a dancing girl, by her selfless service, prevented a Muslim chieftain from destroying the Srirangam temple completely; he

was ruling from Srirangam as a subordinate of the Madurai Sultan. When Kampana's rule was established, she managed to send a secret message to Gopanna, a chieftain of Kampana, who defeated the Muslim chief and reinstated the idol of Ranganatha Swami. N. Sethuraman quotes the most touching passage from the "Kōilozhugu" (Temple chronicle) in this regard. When the Lord was reinstated, Gopanna thanked the dancer for her selfless service and asked her to demand any gift for her loyalty to the Lord.

அவள் தன்னுடைய வார்க்கத்துக்கு அரங்கனின்
திருமடைப்பள்ளியில் கொள்ளியும்
திருக்கொட்டாரத்திலே வாய்க்கரிகியும்
அந்திமகாலத்திலே ஸாதிக்கவேணு
மென்று கேட்டுக்கொண்டாள்

"Aval tannuḍaiya vargattukku Aranganin
tirumaḍaippaḷḷiyil kolliyum
tirukkottārattilē vāikkariṣiyum
andimakālattilē sādikkaveṇu
menṇu kēṭṭukkondaḷ"

She begged that the dancing lot may ever be blessed with temple honours on their demise, such as the torch from the temple kitchen (to light the pyre), and a little

rice from the temple store house for offering to the corpse. It is significant that this boon given to her was in practice till the Madras Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act of 1947 was passed by the then Madras Presidency. The above said historic incident proves that it was the inseparable religious sentiment which had kept the art of dance alive, inspite of insurmountable hindrances, due to political and religious struggles. If there were attempts to revive the art, it was mainly because it was considered divine and not as a mere entertainment. It was during that period of revivalistic movement, the "Darpana" literature on various aspects of performing arts like Abhinaya and Sangita arose, mirroring the forgotten "Mārgi". Even the celebrated commentary of Adiyārkunallār on the Tamizh epic, "Silappadikāram" belongs to this period. These attempts at revival of the "Mārgi" technique were only a partial success, as evidenced from Chatura Dāmōdara's "Sangita Darpaṇa" stating that some of the ragas mentioned in "Sangita Ratnākara" of 12th century was obsolete and not retrievable (ie., in the 16th century). Hence the gap between theory and practice had already set in. But the spirit behind the art was surely revived. The classical music of even Tamizhnāḍu which had its own grammar

and tradition as seen in the Tēvāram hymns also come to be referred to as “Karnāṭaka Sangitam”, because it was revived by the Karnataka King, Kampana under the spiritual leadership of Swami Vidyāranya. The habit of referring to anything classical or an age old custom as “karnāṭakam” in Tamizh was also because of this.

Even this partial revival was short lived. In mid 16th century, the Portuguese plundered the temples from Kanchi to Tiruchendur and Travancore; the conversion of the “Paravas”- the coastal fisherman between Rameswaram and Kanyakumari implied a transfer of allegiance from the Vijayangar to Portugal. Such constant conflicts for power, wealth and religion kept South India in tension again from 16th century. Naturally, the performing arts suffered heavily due to lack of economic and psychological support, leading to the inevitable degradation, culminating in sociological disrepute. We must be thankful to those “Dēvadāsis”, “Rājadāsis”, other artistes and Gurus for having preserved with conviction and passed on to posterity whatever they could manage, in such hostile circumstances.

In the first quarter of the 20th century, the degeneration of the Dēvadāsi system invited dynamic opposition from social reformers. An English lady, Miss Tenant

collected signatures from respectable citizens promising to keep away from dance art. The Governments of the Princely States, Mysore (in 1910) and Travancore (in 1930) abolished the system of dedicating Dēvadāsis to temples. Following this, Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, hailing from a Dēvadāsi family and an active social worker of Madras, piloted a bill in the then Assembly of Madras Presidency for the same purpose. In effect, the opposition to the evils of the decadent Dēvadāsi system took shape as opposition to dance art itself. As a reaction to this Anti Nautch movement, Sri E. Krishna Iyer - a lawyer cum freedom fighter and a dancer in his own right - successfully spearheaded a counter movement in support of the art and even renamed the "Sadir" as "Bharatanāṭyam". This was the starting point for regaining the importance for the art of dance; but the traditional sacred ritualistic link of dance with the temples was put an end to by the Madras Dēvadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act of 1947.

The post-Independence India has experienced a swelling of parochial pride through mere regional glorification. E. Krishna Iyer writes in 1962, "Most of the dance masters and dancers of former centuries had equipped themselves sufficiently with a knowledge of the theory of the art also

and many of them were versed, not only in their mother tongue Tamil, but also in Sanskrit and Telugu, in which authoritative treatises abounded." After talking about the intrinsic value of Bharatanāṭyam in its "Sadir Natya form", Krishna Iyer adds, "A genius is yet to be born, who can train deserving talents with requisite qualifications to present the art in all its fullness, as it was in ancient and medieval times, as it can be and as it ought to be". Hence the duty of the next generation is to see that the artistic technique is revived in its full glory on a pan-Indian "Mārgi" lines, as in the days of yore.

The day we begin to perceive the time-immemorial links, would usher a golden age of the modern history of India. For this, the first step is to realize our common ancestry as well as our common nativity. For example, when my sweet mother tongue Tamizh is said to have connections with far off Scandinavia and Japan, is it not ridiculous to believe that it has no connection with other languages in our own country? Let us at least in the coming century learn to look at India from the Indian point of view. We have to rewrite our history, if we want people to be united, if we desire self respect and if we are sincere about the ideal of nation building.

Great authorities from all regions had kept the "Mārgi" link alive through their literary works. The Mārgi was the binding factor, uniting not only the whole of Bhāratavarsha, but also other parts of Asia. My humble research for three decades, leading towards the revival of Mārgi has revealed the common sub-stratum of Indian culture.





CHAPTER - II

NATYA SASTRA - A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Sage Bharata's Nāṭya Sāstra is an encyclopedic work on the Theatre Art. It is easily the oldest extant treatise on the subject in the world. It consists of thirty six chapters written in the Samskrita language. From the style of presentation, as well as the syntax, it resembles Vedic literature, and it is rightly called the Fifth Veda. The work is referred to as both Nāṭya Veda and Nāṭya Sāstra.

This magnum opus has governed the laws of aesthetics in India from very remote times. It has influenced the allied arts of painting, sculpture and poetics. It has been the common basis for classical tradition in music, dance, drama, poetics and iconography for the entire Indian sub-continent. It has also influenced all the countries where " Sanātana Dharma " (later known as Hinduism) spread its roots. Nāṭya Sāstra is the very sub-stratum of the artistic living tradition of our Bhāratavarsha. It is a vibrant phenomenon in our planet which is constantly experiencing changes. Though the vitality of this Sastra has been permanent in its oral and practical traditions, a systematic study of its precepts has unfortunately been out of vogue in

the last five centuries in India itself. A work which had influenced Aristotle and hence the Greek Drama, that which has inspired the Chinese Theatre, the Japanese performing arts, or even the theatre of Far East, came to be forgotten by Indians of the North from the twelfth century and those of the South after the fourteenth century. There were inevitable political, religious, sociological and economic causes for this tragedy. Studying and following the path shown by Sage Bharata was called "Mārga" or Mārgi meaning classical. This common Mārgi style in music, dance and drama co-existed with the respective regional style called "Deśi". Deśa means region and Deśi is regional. This can be compared with the Samskrta language, having co-existed as lingua franca in India along with the respective Prākṛta languages and dialects of regions (Deśi Vibhāṣhas), until a hundred years ago. The post-independence India has fortunately revived and revitalised many of the Deśi forms of dance and theatrical traditions. These include Bharatanāṭyam (which used to be called "Sadir" till about fifty years ago), Kathak, Kathakali, Manipuri, Odissi, Kūchipudi, Sattriya and many others like the Bhāgavata Mela, Kūṭiyāṭṭam, Chau, Terukkūttu, Yakshagāna and even folk forms like Rāmlila, Nautanki and Bhavai. The Mārgi or the common classical tradition which was like the very root of this great banyan tree of Indian Performing Arts can

be revived only through an in-depth study of the Nāṭya Sāstra.

THE MODERN HISTORY OF NATYA SASTRA :

Paul Ragnaud was the first who studied a few chapters of Nāṭya Sāstra in the late 19th century. His pupil France Grosset was the first to edit and print chapters I to XIV in 1888. This created an awareness among all Indologists about this great work. In 1894, the complete work was brought out from Bombay by Sivadatta and Kasinatha Panduranga Parab through the Nirayāsagara Press. In 1922, Berard Broeler brought out just the 28th chapter on Music. Another complete edition came out from Varanasi in 1929, edited by Batukanath Sarma and Baladeva Upadhyaya. Another major landmark in the modern history of Nāṭya Sāstra is the discovery of the commentary on it called “ Abhinavabhāratī ” (new words on Bharata’s work) by Abhinavagupta, a great Vedantic scholar who lived in Kashmir in the early 11th century. Pischel, a German scholar, was the first to mention this commentary. S.K. De of Calcutta worked on the 6th and 7th chapters of this commentary, but unfortunately he did not bring it out. Manavalli Ramakrishna Kavi of Andhra edited the original text along with the entire commentary of Abhinavagupta in four volumes which were brought out from Baroda under the Gaekwad Oriental Series. The first volume came out in 1926, followed by the second volume. The third volume was published in 1954 and the fourth volume came

out in 1964 after the death of the editor in 1956. The same year, K.S. Ramaswami Sastri re-edited the first volume for a second edition. There is yet another edition of Nāṭya Śāstra brought out by Dr. Manmohan Ghosh in two volumes. He brought out the first volume of his English translation (of Chapters 1 to 27) in 1951 itself and the second volume (of Chapters 20 to 36) in 1959 . Other translations include those of Narayana Pisharodi in Malayalam, B.L. Shukla in Hindi, P.S.R. Appa Rao in Telugu and of Adhya Rangachar in Kannada and English also. Srirama Desikan's Tamil translation is under print and N.S. Desikan's Tamil translation (of Chapters 1 to 16) is yet to be published. A new critical edition of the Nāṭya Śāstra is now being prepared by Prof. K.D. Tripathi as Editor-in-chief.

My research work has been particularly with regard to the practical application of the Nṛtta, Abhinaya, Bhāva and Rasa aspects of Nāṭya Śāstra. It has been a correlated study of the Nāṭya Śāstra, Its commentary, the relevant sculptures and inscriptions in Indian temples. There are sculptural codifications of the Karaṇas or units of dance, described in the fourth chapter of Nāṭya Śāstra. Though there are dance-like and dance sculptures based on Nāṭya Śāstra all over India, the Karaṇa sculptures are seen carved as an illustration of these definitions, silently adorning the walls of five temples in Tamilnadu. They are in the Brihadiśwara Temple (Tanjavur), Vriddhagiriśwara

Temple (Vṛiddhāchalam) and Aruṇāchaleśwara Temple (Tiruvannamalai). These have been another primary source for me to reconstruct the dance aspect of the Nāṭya Śāstra. The relevant inscriptions found along with the Karaṇa figures at Kumbakonam and Chidambaram Temples prove that they were not meant to be mere architectural embellishments, but as permanent illuminaries of the knowledge of Bharata's art. I have reconstructed this entire dance technique for practice; I have also incorporated it in my dance and choreography. While I was awarded the Ph. D. Degree for my thesis on 'Kāraṇas in Indian Dance and Sculpture', the real goal of my life has been to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The 13 episode Telefilm serial, "Bhāratīya Nāṭya Śāstra", is a concrete documentation of my practical application of the Nāṭya Śāstraic Principles in dance and in certain other aspects.

BHARATA - THE AUTHOR:

Sage Bharata is called the "Ādiguru" on the subject. His biography and date are shrouded in mystery, as in the case of other such personalities. He was a seer, and hence a link between the past, present and future, as well as a chain between super-human, human, sub-human and inanimate levels. He is said to have received the knowledge of Nāṭya directly from Brahma, the Creator Himself. This mythological account is only a re-assertion of the Indian approach to the very concept of "Vidya"

or learning. Brahma is said to have created the Fifth Veda (पञ्चमो वेद) namely Nāṭyaveda by compiling its elements from the four Vedas. He took "Pāṭhya" (पाठ्य) or recitation from the Rg Veda, "Abhinaya" (अभिनय) or the art of communication from the Yajurveda, "Gānam" (गानम्) or music from Sāma veda and "Rasa" (रस) or aesthetic experience from the Atharva veda. The term "Veda" has its root in "Vid", (विद्) which means to know. Veda is knowledge. Śāstra is systematisation of knowledge. Veda implies a holistic approach and Śāstra denotes its specialisation through the laws of differentiation. Any branch of knowledge in India is introduced to the student only from a holistic view. *Sā Vidyā Yayā Vimucyate* -(सा विद्या यया विमुच्यते) learning is that which liberates. Hence the very introduction to any branch of knowledge is only from a philosophical point of view. In other words, the essence of learning is introduced in the very beginning. The study of the relationship between self and the Universe is inevitable in the Indian methodology of learning any subject. In this sense, the Nāṭya Śāstra is Nāṭya Veda. The term Śāstra etymologically means that which regulates or governs in a systematic or orderly exposition. A Śāstra has to be that which gives precise formulas, which admit only one interpretation. The Nāṭya Śāstra gives innumerable technical terms, the etymological derivations of which lead us to ideas

of astounding precision. The concepts therein are irrevocable, unambiguous, universally applicable, and are of Permanent value in an intellectual, aesthetic and moral sense. No wonder that such a work was written by a Muni (Seer), whose nativity is not definitely known, nor is relevant, for he and his work belong to the common heritage of humanity. Bharata himself mentions that his Nāṭya Śāstra is meant for the Saptadvīpa or seven continents of our planet, and more so for Jambūdvīpa and Bhāratavarsha. Bhāratavarsha is India, and according to ancient Indian Geography, Jambūdvīpa meant more or less the whole Asia and Europe together.

In the Pūrvaranga of the allegorical play Sankalpasūryōdaya, Vedānta Desika, who popularised Ramanuja's philosophy, had made a poetic reference to Sage Bharata. He says that the Muni's very name impregnates in its three syllables "Bha", "Ra", and "Ta" the concepts of *Bhāva*, *Rāga*, and *Tāla*. "Bharata" actually means Indian, who belongs to Bhāratavarsha. The vedic tribe by this name who lived on the banks of river Saraswati referred to their Agni (sacrificial fire) as Bhārati. The Mahābhārata is the story of the Bhāratas. Krishna addresses Arjuna as Bhārata, as seen in the Bhagavad Gita. All of us belonging to the Bhārata-Puṇya- Bhūmi are Bhāratas and Bhāratīs. Bhāratavarsha is called Puṇya-Bhūmi- and Karma-Bhūmi; this land mass has ever reflected its spiritual

radiance from the time of the first man — Manu. In this context, etymologically, “Bha” is the Akshara or embryonic syllable signifying Brahman. “Rata” means one who ravel. Hence “Bha”+ “Rata” means one who ravel on the perception of the All-Pervading Brahman. Bhārata-Punya- Bhūmi has had this spiritual enjoyment as the very basis of life. BharataMuni was a Rshi, with a cosmic view of life, who helped us to visualise the Macro Universe within the Micro Universe, that is the theatre. He himself has explained “Nāṭya” as a representation of the three worlds in which not only good and bad are portrayed, but every animate and inanimate objects find a place.

BHARATA OR BHARATAS?

Many scholars have opined that the present text of Nāṭya Śāstra is of composite authorship. It is said that Bharata was a pen name utilised by a few authorities belonging to different centuries. Though one can surely see some inheritance and interpolations, I have more recently started believing that the entire text running to thirty six chapters must have originated from or put together by a single mind of Ādi-Bharata. Bharata, like Śāṅkarācārya could have later become a common name for his followers or actors. But the present text seems to have an alignment which is so well knit, that the contents of the chapters are often inter-dependent for a proper understanding. Cross references are almost a characteristic of the entire work. For

example, for me to master the contents of the fourth chapter, I had to get well acquainted with almost all the chapters, and specialise in atleast ten of them. Though I had earlier² blindly believed the other scholars about the concept of multiple authorship, I changed my opinion after a deeper study along with practical application.

36 OR 37 CHAPTERS ?

There has been a discrepancy in the different editions with regard to chapter alignment as well as the number of chapters. Though the exact location of Bharata's nativity is beyond our comprehension, from the early thirties of this century many scholars like Mahamahopadhyaya Kuppaswami Sastri, K.S. Ramaswami Sastri - the editor of Nāṭya Śāstra, Dr. T.N. Ramachandran and others have shown the possibility of his Kashmirian link. According to some leading personalities of Kashmir like Dr. Farooq Abdullah, his learned mother and Professor Rita Jitendra, a sanskrit scholar, dramatist and secretary J & K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, the local oral tradition in Kashmir is that Bharata belonged to their region. It is significant that Abhinavagupta and atleast another six earlier commentators belonged to Kashmir. The Kashmiri Śaivism is based on thirty six Tattvas or principles. Abhinava's commentary on Nāṭya Śāstra, called the Abhinavabhāratī opens the respective chapters with a verse of his, highlighting these

Tattvas. For example, the Śaiva Tattva of the five primordial elements is taken up in the first five chapters. Hence in all probability, there were only 36 and not 37 chapters originally. The story of Bharata-Putrās being cursed by other ṛshis is in all probability, a later addition.

DATE—BHARATA AND NATYA SASTRA AND THE YUGA PUZZLE:—

The discussion on the date of Nāṭya Śāstra would almost amount to the very question of rewriting Indian chronology, from the traditional Indian method of calculating time. Many scholars have suggested many dates; these range from 500 B.C. to 500 A.D. But I have reasons to believe that the present text of Nāṭya Śāstra itself may belong to Pre-epic period. Here is a summery of the exploration.

Dr. Manmohan Ghosh, in his Introduction to his English translation of the Nāṭya Śāstra had already noted that Bharata mentions Artha Śāstra thrice with Bṛhaspati as author. He does not mention Kauṭilya. Hence we can conclude that the Nāṭya Śāstra is surely pre-Mauryan. According to Kota Venkatachalam's "Plot in Indian Chronology", this would mean that Nāṭya Śāstra is prior to 1500 B.C.

Why not take clues from internal evidences and try to calculate time from the traditional Indian view? According to the first

chapter itself, (of Nāṭya Śāstra) Bharata seems to have received the Nāṭya Veda from Brahma, at the commencement of the Treta Yuga. It was the beginning of the reign of Vaivasvata Manu. According to Indian tradition, both Rama and Krishna are historic personalities like Buddha or Jesus Christ. Rama is said to have been a contemporary of Valmiki, the author of Ramayana in Treta Yuga. The last chapter of the Nāṭya Śāstra has connection with the first, for fixing up the date of Bharata. In this chapter, a list of names of ṛshis are given, as those who were listening to the entire Nāṭya Śāstra as preached by Bharata. This list includes the name of Valmiki. This corroborates with the mention of Treta Yuga in the first chapter. It is well known among music historians, that Valmiki's Ramayana was sung by Lava and Kuśa with "Jāti" and not "Rāga" as its musical base. The Nāṭya Śāstra delineates the "Grāma-Mūrcana-Jāti" system and not its later evolution of the rāga classification. Moreover Valmiki mentions two terms relating to dance, highlighted in the Nāṭya Śāstra ie., Nṛtta and Angahāra. These terms are used by Valmiki in relation to the artists of Ravana's court. It is thought-provoking to realise that the entire voluminous work of Nāṭya Śāstra, containing thirty six chapters in an encyclopaedic style, does not mention Rama and Krishna, the two heroes of all times, in the theatre world. Why are they not mentioned ?

The reason is too obvious. When Bharata was propounding the Nāṭya Śāstra in the presence of Valmiki, Rāmāvatāra had not taken place. Since Ādi-Bharata was the father of Indian poetics and since Valmiki is referred to as the Ādi Kavi, it is highly probable that they lived at the same time. Therefore, Valmiki taking lessons in Dramatics, Music and Poetics under Bharata before starting his immortal Ramayana, is quite natural. The inspiration from the Karuṇā Rasa emanating from the death of one of the pair of the Kraunca birds was the starting point of Valmiki writing the Ramayana. Was it not Bharata who was the father of the Rasa theory? All this makes us believe that "Valmiki" mentioned in the last chapter of Nāṭya Śāstra, is none other than the Ādi Kavi himself.

About forty names of ṛshis are mentioned along with that of Vālmiki as those who learnt the Nāṭya Śāstra from Bharata, as he was propounding the treatise. This list includes great names, significant to history like Viswāmitra, Vasishṭa, Pulastya, Agastya, Brhaspati, Nārada, Kaṇva and such others. At least the first four are known in the Rāmāyaṇa as contemporaries of the period. Pulastya was Rāvaṇa's grand father. Viśwāmitra, Vasishṭa and Agastya were ṛshis highly venerated by Rāma. This list of names gives us greater confidence to place Bharata as contemporary of Vālmiki.

The last chapter of Nāṭya Śāstra includes a very interesting

question posed by the ṛshis to Bharata. They respectfully ask, “ How, oh Sir! the drama has descended down to the earth from heaven ? Why have your descendants come to be known as “Śūdras” ? Bharata explains how his sons, intoxicated with the knowledge of Nāṭya Śāstra, produced “Prahasana” (humorous satire). This offended the sages, who became angry and cursed them to attain the character of Śūdras and be unfit for handling the Vēdas. The curse was for their lineage as well. Through the intervention of Indra and other Dēvas, the ṛshis proclaimed that Nāṭya would not perish, but the curse on the actors will take effect in its entirety. The Bharata putras decided to kill themselves and also blamed Bharata for his having devised Nāṭya. Bharata advised them not to destroy Nāṭya, which has been devised with great difficulty with its origin in the Vēdas, their Angas and Upāṅgas. He said that the actors may undergo “Prāyascitta” - purificatory ceremonies after every performance as advised by the Apsaras.

After this incident, in course of time, a king named Nahusha attained heaven by merit. He was the grandson of Purūravas; when he saw Nāṭya in heaven, he decided to take it to earth to his palace. When the Dēvas refused permission, he approached Bharata and convinced him to send his sons to earth, in order to establish ‘Nāṭya’ in his palace. He said, “In the house of my grandfather, Urvaśi has taught Nāṭya in his harem. But when

the harem, was distressed on the death of the King who became insane due to her disappearance, this art was lost. I wish to resumé the production of this art form, thus adding to your fame". So Bharata told his sons that they may go to earth and that would end their curse; they would no longer be despised by Brahmins and kings. Bharata declared Kōhala as his successor and said that his "Uttara Tantra", i.e., supplementary treatise will treat the practical application of theories and include "Kārika" (memorial verses) and Nirukta (etymology). Unfortunately Kōhala's work has reached us only in fragments.

The above mentioned legend has been taken by some scholars as a later addition to an older text of Nāṭya Śāstra, for the first chapter itself speaks of the origin of Nāṭya. It was devised by Brahma, as an audio visual aid for education through entertainment. From the first chapter, we gather that this happened in the beginning of Trētāyuga, when deterioration in morality had already set in on earth, particularly in Jambūdīp and Bhārata Varsha. The delegation led by Indra to Brahma requested for a new device in order to re-instill character; that product was Nāṭya. But its place of performance as per the first chapter is the Dēva Lōka during Indra Dhvaja Festival. The location of the second performance, as per the fourth chapter, is Kailās. Even the construction of the theatre for which Viswakarma was the architect, seems to have been only in the Dēva Lōka. Hence,

the story of the descent of Nāṭya to earth is not totally redundant as criticised by some scholars, while dealing with the origin of Nāṭya. Even if the story of the last chapter is considered as a later addition, it has been well connected and hence not out of context. The other possibility is that the event is much older than the time of Bharata. It is perhaps worth looking into the historicity of this event.

Nahusha's name is mentioned in the Vamsāvaṇi of Purāṇic history. He is the grandson of Purūravas. While it is difficult to fix the date of this king, or blindly accept the date suggested by Dr. Trivedi in his "Indian Chronology" (as Satya Yuga-6581 BC), it is relevant to note that Nahusha belonged to an age not far removed from that of Manu, the law giver. In fact, Purūravas and Urvaśi are mentioned even in the Rg Vēda. Here is a hypothesis of mine, which may be considered by scholars for discussion.

The contents of Nāṭya Sāstra is perhaps anterior to Nahusha. The fact that both Pāṇini and Bharata do not mention each other, may mean that they were contemporaries. Pāṇini mentions the two Nāṭya Sūtrakāras - Silālin and Kṛśāśwa. The present text of Nāṭya Sāstra must have completely incorporated their works. Bharata himself, on some occasions, quotes traditional views on certain topics, proving that there were authorities prior to him. It is possible that during the time of Pūruravas, a great dancer by

name Urvaśī could have caused infatuation in the king, leading to insanity when she left him. This incident was the seed for the great literature of Kālidāsa, “Vikramōrvaśiyam”. Manu Smṛti condemns dramatic art and classifies actors among the seven “Antyajās” It forbade men from witnessing performances. This must have been a reaction to the unfortunate incident in the life of Pūruravas. It is likely that the art that was condemned was revived by Nahusha, the grandson of Pūruravas. This proves that the social acceptability of the art depends on the moral and ethical standards of the artists of every age.

It is likely that this historic event was narrated by Bharata himself during a much later time, i.e., during that of Vālmiki. While the contents of Nāṭya Śāstra is much older, the work must have been given the present shape by a single author- Bharata, during the time of Vālmiki.

The International Society for the Investigation of Ancient Civilisations has done yeomen service to the field of Indian history, by fixing the dates of Rama, Buddha and Śāṅkara through seminars and publications. According to N. Narasinga Rao, in his book. “Date of Rama”, his accurate astronomical calculations have led him to conclude the actual day and date of Rama’s birth as Sunday, February 11, 4433 B.C. Krishna’s demise has been an accepted date, as 3102 B.C., with which the Kaliyuga is said to be calculated, according to the Hindu

Calendar. Taking Bharata to have written the Nāṭya Sāstra before Rama's birth, we can surmise that it was before 4433 B.C, perhaps just within a difference of a few decades, in the same century.

R. Siddhanta Shastree in his "History of Pre-Kaliyuga India" gives an ancient view of calculating time. According to the above calculation it would amount to a mind-boggling chronology - namely more than two million years since the Nāṭya Sāstra was conceived. The following table gives the details:-

+	Beginning of Kali Yuga	3102 Bc
	Present Christian era	1995 AD
	Present year of Kali Era	5097
+	Years of Dvapārayuga	864000
+	Years of Tretāyuga	296000
	Years that have elapsed since Nāṭya Sāstra was conceived (ie., beginning of Tretayuga)	2165097

Perhaps the understanding of the Yuga theory needs an inter-disciplinary approach with astronomers, geologists, samskrita pundits and astro scientists - all working together. The Polar shifts, changing of the magnetic field, differences in geographic factors with geological upsurges, and the slowing down of the rotation of our planet need correlated study with a

purāṇic view of Time and Space. Whatever may be the distance of time from that of ours, we can safely conclude that Bharata lived when Valmiki lived. I leave it for scholars and scientists to calculate and solve the Yuga puzzle. The above account is only to create thought ripples among the elite, about the profundity of our human history and the role of India in its civilisation.

Another possibility is that Bharata and his Nāṭya Sāstra are as old as the time of Nahusha. The legend of the last chapter might be the work of Kohala, in order to link his Uttara Tantra with the much older Nāṭya Vēda. Perhaps Kohala was contemporary of Vālmiki. The dates of Pruravas, Nahusha and Vālmiki thus become relevant to fix up the date of Nāṭya Sāstra. The Yuga puzzle needs to be solved in order to reconstruct even our cultural history. Barring the mention of Nahusha, Bharata's Nāṭya Sāstra does not refer to any other mortal king. If Pūruvas and Nahusha are to be placed in Satya Yuga as Dr. Trivedi did, the internal evidence from Nāṭya Sāstra as its having been compiled in the beginning of Treta Yuga will not make sense. We will have to wonder if these lines are interpolations.

VEDIC AFFINITY:

The affinity that Nāṭya Sāstra has with vedic metres certainly proves the validity of calling it the Nāṭya Vēda, which is a part of the Gāndharva Veda, which in turn is an Upaveda of Sāma Veda. The question and answer format of the Nāṭya Sāstra is surely

Upanishadic in its character. Dr. Ghosh himself agrees that in point of the mythological elements, the Nāṭya Sāstra is very close to the epics. From the view of the linguistic history, the mentioning of the seven older Prākṛtas would take Nāṭya Sāstra to a more dim past. Above all this, he says “ that the metres used in Nāṭya Sāstra lack in many cases Sandhi and even allow hiatus in places of internal yati, seems to show that it carried the vedic tradition in its metres” (I xi). In spite of these extraordinary observations, Dr. Ghosh placed the text only as late as 500 B.C, obviously due to the influence of western view of the diminished antiquity of Indian Civilisation.

In the ancient literature of Sanātana Dharma, the vedas are four; they are also called Sruti because they are to be learnt by hearing, as recitation. They are not to be written down. The limbs of the Vedas i.e., the Vedāṅgas, are six; they are the six auxiliary sciences, which were developed to understand the vedas. In other words they are needed to interpret the vedas. They are :-

1. Śikṣa (शिक्षा) - The Science of phonetics
pronunciation and articulation
2. Vyākaraṇa (व्याकरण) - Grammar
3. Chandas (छन्दस्) - Rhythm of language and hence
it denotes metre

4. Nirukta (निरुक्त) - Etymology
5. Jyōtisha (ज्योतिष) - Science of time through astronomical calculations
6. Kalpa (कल्प) - Vast literature meant for life.

All the above six elements are found in the Natya Sastra.

Kalpa is classified as Śrauta Sutra and Grhyasutra. They are guide books for the practical application of the Vedic prescriptions and hence gives the details of daily and special ritual. It is also called Dharma (Law). The entire vedic literature is in the form of Sūtra. Sūtra literally means thread. It is to put in a nutshell all knowledge. It is an aphoristic statement in the briefest way possible. The Nāṭya Sāstra is the Sūtra form. This is one more major factor to indentify the work as Nāṭya Vēda. Sutra is generally prose. If Sūtra is in a poetic form, it is called Kārika. The Nāṭya Sāstra has this style followed for all the definitions. In the following example for the Sūtra form, we see how Bharata gives the entire principle of aesthetics in just six words.

विभाव अनुभाव व्यभिचारि संयोगात् रस निष्पत्तिः

Vibhāva anubhāva vyabhicāri samyōgāt rasa nishpattiḥ

Sūtra and Kārika forms are so short that they need supplimentation. This is called Vārtika. Harsha (probably

Harshavardhana) is said to have written a Vārtika. for Nāṭya Śāstra. But it is totally lost. Vārtikas also need further elaboration and commentary. This is called Bhāṣya. Many Bhāṣyas were written for Nāṭya Śāstra which include those of Lollāṭa, Śāṅkuka, Bhaṭṭa Toṭa and Abhinavagupta. Only Abhinavagupta's work has come to us in entirety. The Nāṭya Śāstra is universal in appeal and timeless in relevance like the vedas themselves.

The story of Brahma creating the Nāṭya Vēda by compiling elements from the four vedas, and the handing over of the text to a human being Bharata, is generally ignored as fiction. The vēdas are not a product of the human intellect. The mantras are present permanently in the cosmic vibrations. The ṛshis were not the composers of vedic mantras, but they were the receivers - like the radio. Hence they are called Mantra- Drṣṭa and not Mantra-Karta - i.e., those who perceived and not composed. The term ṛshi means a seer, i.e., one who sees beyond the physical eyes. This is precisely the reason for hailing Bharata as a ṛshi or Muni. He has only recorded like a scribe what he perceived through his divine power of concentration. However the vedic age is beyond our comprehension.

The reader who is used to western imperial chronology with christian calendar, is bound to be shocked at the above suggested dates. One must realise that the antiquity of Indian history

was limited not only to suit Greek history but also to safeguard the biblical concept of creation of the world by God in 4000 B.C. Even the western world is now negating this view. Let Indians awake to recognise their heritage.

I have tried to present to the world of scholars the various available data with regard to the possibility of finding a solution to the problem of fixing up a date for the One Common Scripture on performing arts and poetics of our Bharata Varsha. It is possible to arrive at a conclusion only through an inter-disciplinary study. But the basic need is to relieve ourselves from the shackles of western way of limiting our antiquity and look into our own sources for reconstructing our past. This in turn will surely revitalise our much dwindled common Indian psych and the common Indian self-esteem.

CONTENTS OF NĀṬYA SĀSTRA :-

The thirty six chapters are in the form of questions asked by Ātréya and other sages for which Bharatamuni gives the answers. It includes interesting and symbolic stories regarding the origin of Nāṭya and some of its elements. The subjects it includes have an amazing variety which are arranged with some differences in their alignment in different editions. The contents included are as follows.

1. Mythical origin of Nāṭya; Brahma presenting the

Nāṭyaveda to Bharata.

2. Theatre construction - dimension and architectural details.
3. Installation of deities on the stage and auditorium and the Yajñas connected with it.
4. Śiva's suggestion to include dance elements in dramas, and detailed description of the basic units of dance called "Karaṇas" as well as their combination.
5. Preliminaries of the play, and their Yajña character.
6. A summary of the most important terms in the Śāstra followed by a detailed description of Rasa or aesthetic experience.
7. Exposition of the Bhāva or the various psychological states of mind.
8. to 13- Physical expression and analysis of major and minor limbs in the body, and their possible movements based on laws of symmetry, proportion and purpose.
- 14 The conventions on the stage with regard to zones and also the costumes, manners and testes of people of various regions of Bharatavarsha.
15. to 19-Vācīkābhinaya or verbal expression including Samskrta grammar, prosody, metre, recitation, intonation, etc.,

- 20 Ten major types of plays, which are religious and secular in nature.
- 21 Plot or structure of the plays.
22. Vṛtti or styles in production.
23. Āhārya or the external elements such as make-up, costumes and accessories.
- 24 Harmonious blend in the use of all the elements of expression.
25. Courtesans and their qualifications.
- 26 Portrayal of varied objects and situations.
27. Siddhi or attainment - its classification and results.
28. Theory of Music.
29. Stringed Instruments and classification of orchestra.
- 30 Wind Instruments
- 31 Percussion Instruments
- 32 Musical forms.
- 33 Modes of playing drums.
- 34 Characterisation
- 35 Distribution of roles in a play and the members of a drama troupe.

36 Mythological account of the descent of drama to earth.

From the above, one can understand the multi-dimensional character of the Nāṭya Sāstra and the scope it offers to study it from various points of view.

ANSWER TO FIVE QUESTIONS :-

The entire Nāṭya Sāstra can be viewed as answers to five questions asked by the ṛshi disciples of Bharata in the very first chapter. The pertinent questions are.

1. How did Nāṭya Veda come into existence ?
2. For whom was it meant ?
3. What are its limbs ?
4. What are its means or sources ?
5. How is it reduced to practice ?

The answers are spread with cross reference in the thirty six chapters. The essence of the answers are as follows :-

1. Brahma created the Nāṭya Veda as an audio-visual aid to save humanity from deterioration in moral standards, resulting in their pleasant experiences being mixed with sorrow, at the beginning of Treta Yuga. Brahma created this Veda by taking elements from the other four Vedas, and handed it over to Bharata.
2. It is meant for both the poet and the actor.

3. Its limbs are Rasa, Bhāva, Abhinaya, Dharmi, Vṛitti, Pravṛtti, Siddhi, Swara, Ātōdyam, Gānam and Ranga.

RASA: Rasa is the soul of Nāṭya. It is the experience of aesthetic pleasure. It is born out of a whole process of enactment of feelings called Bhāva.

BHĀVA: This is a psychological state of mind. Vibhāvas are the causes, Anubhāvas are their effects and Vyabhicāri Bhāvas are the transitory moods. They jointly strengthen any one of the eight dominant psychological states of human experience. These are the eight Sthāyi Bhāvas. When enacted and expressed, they produce aesthetic pleasure or Rasa, which is carried forward to the spectators. This expression is Abhinaya.

ABHINAYA : This may be physical, verbal ornamental or emotional in nature. Nāṭya depends on Abhinaya or enactment. It is therefore described and redefined by Bharata as imitation and glorification. Anukaraṇa is imitation; Nāṭya is not mere re-telling, but it is Anukirtana or a stylised glorification of an event. Hence, it is a recreation. Nāṭya includes the whole creation in it. The objective world is personalised by the actor and then again externalised through abhinaya. In other words, it is a process of transformation of *Being* to *Becoming*. When realities of life with all its pleasures and pain are applied through Abhinaya of four kinds, it is Natya. It is seemingly real.

It has similarities with reality, yet illusory. Bharata, being a ṛshi, could see the world in totality and analyse it to systematise its representation.

DHARMI: These are the modes in expression. In short, they are realism and stylism called Lōkadharmi and Nāṭyadharmi. Both are involved in Nāṭya with a harmonious blend. While Lōkadharmi is more Sātvika-based, Nāṭyadharmi is more Āṅgika - based. For example, gesticulating as crying is Nāṭyadharmi, while shedding real tears will be Lōkadharmi. Unfortunately, these two forms are now often misunderstood by some. They think that if the audience do not understand what is being presented, it is Nāṭyadharmi, and when every Bhava gets communicated to the last man in the audience, it is Lōkadharmi.

VṚTTI: Vṛttis are functions or actions. It is in the levels of thought, word and action of the body. When they are ornamented in Nāṭya, we get four Vṛttis, which are:

Bhāraṭi	-	pertaining to activity of speech
Sātvati	-	speech at the mental level
Ārabhaṭi	-	forceful activity of the body
Kaiśiki	-	graceful activity of the body

PRAVṚTTI: These are activities relating to thought, word and action pertaining to regional modes of behaviour, speech,

dialect, intonation, occupation, environment, dress, tradition etc., Bharata divides Bhāratavarsha into four regions and prescribes Vrttis in production of plays to suit their respective tastes. The four Pravrttis are:

PRAVRTTIS	REGION	RECOMMENDED VRTTI
Pāncālī	North	Ārabhaṭi and Śātvati
Odramāgadhi	East	Śātvati and Bhārati
Āvanti	West	Kaiśiki and Śātvati
Dākshinātya	South	Kaiśiki

SIDDHI: This means attainment. It is of two types- “Mānushi” or “Deivi”. IF the audience vociferously applauds, it is Mānushi-siddhi; if they sit in a trance, transcending mere physical consciousness, it is Deivi-siddhi.

SWARA: Swaras are musical notes.

ĀTŌDYAM: This is the term for musical instruments. They are classified as stringed, wind, percussion and metallic.

GĀNAM: Gānam is music and Gitam is vocal music.

RANGA: This is the place of enactment of Nāṭya conceived by the divine architect Viśwakarma. The term Ranga includes the theatre-cum-auditorium, its classification, construction and consecration. All these are elaborated.

These are all the limbs (or Angas) of Nāṭya. Thus the third question of the ṛshis is answered in several chapters. Moreover, the chapters are not organised in the above serial order.

4. The fourth question is with regard to the Pramāṇa or the primary source for Nāṭya. Bharata says that there are three Pramāṇas for Nāṭya. One is Vēda, the second is Lōka or the perceivable world and finally, Ādhyātmika or one's own experience. The beginningless tradition of the veda gives the spiritual basis of Nāṭya. The Lōka gives it unlimited themes for inspiration, and self-experience sharpens the capacity to enliven the events. It also implies one's own vision of the Self.

5 The fifth and last question concerning the mode of putting the Nāṭyaveda into practice is also answered with details of productions of varied kinds. These need Gurus and the living tradition to guide. The last chapter gives a warning to actors. Nāṭya is not an easy path. This chapter tells us how the actors annoyed ṛshis with their bad behaviour and got cursed. This signifies the importance of restraint on the part of artists.

THE PURPOSE OF NĀṬYA

The potentiality of Nāṭya explained by Bharata must be constantly in the minds of producers and the actors of Nāṭya. In the words of Brahma, Bharata says the Nāṭya. "teaches duty to those who go against it, love to those who desire it, chastises those who

are ill-bred or unruly, promotes self restraint in those who are indisciplined, gives courage to cowards, enthusiasm to the valourous, enlightenment to the those of poor intellect and gives wisdom to the learned. It gives diversion to kings and solace to those with a sorrowful mind, wealth to those desirous of it and composure to a mind of conflicts" Bharata categorically says that "there is no wise maxim, no learning, no art or craft, no device, no action, that is not found in Nāṭya". Brahma is said to have devised Nāṭya which is a meeting point of all departments of knowledge.

In the spirit of Bharata's theatre, the entire cosmos is recreated. All the Gods are invoked and installed on the stage and in the auditorium. The theatre itself is considered to be a temple of all Gods, and hence there is no special mention in Nāṭya Sāstra, of the dance of drama that is to be performed in the temple. One must realise that there is nothing secular in our culture. After all, work itself is considered as worship. The Gods installed in the theatre are believed to come for protection and assistance. The eternal time is represented. Nāṭya is action; it is a "Kratu" or Yajna by itself. It is also "Kriḍanam" and hence has the joy of freedom. There is a relationship between this theatre and the Universe. It is a micro cosmic creation and hence its connection with the cosmos is like that of the Piṇḍa and the Brahmāṇḍa.

The Pūrvavarange or the preliminaries of a play which is described

as a regular Yajña is reduced to mere dance by Maheśwara in the fourth chapter. The performance of the Karaṇas and Angahāras is equated with the oblations offered to Agni, and its efficacy with that of a Yajña. These preliminaries are said to give Dr̥ṣṭaphala and Adr̥ṣṭaphala i.e., visible and invisible results. Dance may basically please the human eyes, but the Adr̥ṣṭa-prayojana is its efficacy in not only pleasing the Gods, but in also getting subjectively merged with the constant cosmic rhythm. An actor has the potentiality to realise that even in the seeming reality of life, he is wearing yet another attire to enact that specified role, until the drama of this birth is over. He has the scope to experience the experiences of others, thus constantly travelling inwards and outwards. He has the endowment of identifying his little Self with the objective world outside him, or perceive a convergence of the same into himself. He has the boon of traversing into the limitless vastness of both time and space. When such is the Kārya of Nāṭya, there is no doubt that it is Yōga. But it is upto the actor to use all these potentialities, or get drowned in the unfortunate situation of taking the very play as reality.





CHAPTER - III

NĀṬYA SĀSTRA - THE CULTURAL SUBSTRATUM

The name “Bhāratīya Nāṭya Sāstra” not only means the Nāṭya Sāstra written by Bharata, but also implies that it is the “Nāṭya Vēda” of the Bharatas and hence the common heritage of our country, which is correctly called as “Bhārat” in our Constitution. This Nāṭya Vēda is said to have been created by “Brahma” for the sake of all the Varṇas (vocational groups of men), containing guidance to people for future as well, in all their actions. It is enriched by the knowledge of all arts and crafts. The fifth Veda blossomed from the Yogic mind of Brahma as a remedy for the affliction of addiction to sensual pleasures which the people of “Jambūdvīpa” (approximately Asia and Europe together) were undergoing in the beginning of the “Trētāyugā”. It is clear that it was designed as an audio-visual education on morality; this concept of art was naturally in tune with the concept of Bhārat as “Punjabhūmi” and “Dharmakshētra”. Even after filtering the ethical values, the Nāṭya Sāstra still stand as a symbol of Nationalism, with a striking universal appeal of permanent nature.

There can be no two opinions about the fact, that it was through

Drama, Dance, Music and Kathā that our whole sub-continent got soaked in the common religious-socio-cultural ethos. Even politically there was only one “Law Book” that governed all the kingdoms. It was the Law given by our Dharma Sāstras. In the same manner, there was only one Sāstra for performing arts given by Bharata in ancient India. The roving band of actors followed the precepts of Bharata, to propagate Dharma. In this process, the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata, the Bhāgavata and other folk and historic stories had their divergence and convergence through these performers. These programmes were the only mass media for spreading beliefs, customs, manners, ecological connections and cross - currents in poetical thoughts, as well as every aspect of cultured living. Thanks to these artistes who were responsible for every aspect of our common heritage permeating and percolating throughout the length and breadth of not only Bhārat, but every place where the light of this culture was carried. A major factor of commonality that guided the artistes was the Dharmic attitude, undoubtedly based on faith. Their common Veda was Bharata’s Nāṭya Sāstra at various levels. Hence, it becomes relevant to consider its place today, particularly in the context of a common cultural National awareness, if not a common Dharmic awakening.

One may ask for a proof of the existence of a common “Mārgi” style in ancient India based on Nāṭya Sāstra. If it did not exist.

where is the need for preserving manuscripts of Nāṭya Sāstra in Nepal in the North-East and Kerala in the South? What is the significance for many commentaries of Nāṭya Sāstra having been written by Kashmirian scholars, and for Tamil kings codifying the dance aspects of Nāṭya Sāstra in the form of inscriptions and sculptures in granite? Can it be a mere coincidence that when in the early eleventh century, Abhinavagupta, the great Vedantin was writing a commentary for Nāṭya Sāstra in Kashmir, simultaneously the first series of Karaṇa sculptures based on its fourth chapter was being sculpted by "Rājarāja Cōzhan the Great" in the far south at Tanjāvur? Why did the Jains of Gujarat make paintings of the Cāris (Movement of the legs) described in the Nāṭya Sāstra? Why did the Jains of Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh and Mount Abu in Rajasthan, choose to follow the Nāṭya Sāstra for their sculptural embellishments? Why should all the post-Bharata works in every part of India adhere to his theories or explain new ones based on and in relation to his work? How can striking similarities between the dance sculptures and paintings of Tamilnadu and those of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and even the Himalayan and Indus regions be explained? Every region respects this work and claims it to the progenitor of the respective contemporaneous and contemporary traditions. Some regions like Kashmir in North and Tamilnadu in South tend to believe that Bharata lived and

wrote the work originally in their respective regions. From the linguistic point of view as well as the strength of about a dozen commentaries hailing from Kashmir, some scholars believe that Nāṭya Śāstra could have been written in Kashmir, but there seems to be no internal evidence for the same in the text. A few in Tamilnadu claim that Bharata wrote the work originally in Tamil and later translated it in Sankrit. There seems to be reasonable evidence for this also. On the other hand, the text seems to have given equal importance to every region of Bhāratavarsha.

Bharata's work is the earliest available treatise on performing arts in the world. It deals not only with drama, dance, music, poetics, prosody, language, theatre, architecture and craft, but also gives scope for studying ancient ethnology and ancient geography as well. It is the first work on "Alankāra Śāstra" i.e., poetics, and naturally it has influenced all great poets like Kālidāsa and Kamban, to mention only two. It has been the base for imagemaking in India, and hence, the father of Śilpa Śāstra. The Āgamas are also influenced by it.

THE MĀRGI-DEŚI CHAIN :-

नाट्यवेदप्रवृत्तत्वात् मार्गणत्वान्महर्षिभिः ।

सद्भिस्सञ्चारितत्वाच्च मार्गइमाहुरिदं बुधाः ॥

-Nṛtta Ratnāvali (12th century) 1-52

“That which is delineated in Nāṭya Veda, perceived by Maharṣhis (Sages) and propagated by Sādhus (Authorities) is referred to as Mārga by the elite”

नाट्ये ह्यभिनये छिद्रं प्रच्छादनफलं हि तत् ।
एतद्देशी तु विख्यातं तत्तद्देशजनेच्छया ॥

-Nṛtta Ratnāvali 1 - 54

“Does it not have the fruit of filling up the lacuna in Natya and Abhinaya ? It is popular as Deśi, due to the liking of the people of respective regions”

तदेव रुचिवैचित्र्याच्चित्तरञ्जनकज्जनैः ।
प्रयुक्तं स्वस्वदेशे यत्ततो देशीति कीर्तितम् ॥

Kumba (as quoted in Bharatakosam)

“Deśi is said to be that which is put to use by the people of the respective regions to give pleasure based on their taste”

The above definitions are paralleled by those of Nārada and Pārśvadeva also. Deśi is not governed by country wide Niyama or common rules, but varies from place to place.

The two terms Mārgi and Deśi have come down to us in the fields of Gita, Vādyā and Nṛtta from perhaps the time of Kōhala who was a junior contemporary of Bharata. However Matanga Muni's Bṛhaddesi (believed to have been written around the 8th century AD) is the first work to treat Deśi in a systematic

way. Most of the treatises of post-Bharata period like Sārṅga-deva's Sangita Ratnākara (1230 AD), Jayasena's Nṛttaratnāvali (1249 AD), Pārsvadeva's Sangitasamayāsāra (1300 AD) and many others have clearly given Mārga as earlier paddhati (tradition) and Deśi as the additional one.

What is most interesting is the fact that though Deśi is pertaining to a particular region, the codification of the same has led to the absorption of the Deśi of one region, into the Deśi of other regions. It is now difficult to trace the origin of some of the codified Deśis to any one region. For example Sārṅgadeva's knowledge of Nāṭya in all its branches was said to be distinctly Kashmirian; in several places, he has faithfully followed Abhinavagupta.

The work is almost a versified version of Abhinava's prose. Sārṅgadeva lived at a time when vocal and instrumental music as well as dance were undergoing great changes, along with royal and religious fortunes of the day. He gives both Margi and Desi material under topics like karanas, caris and sthanas etc.

Dr. V. Raghavan in his Introduction to Nṛttaratnāvali concludes through an internal evidence in Kallinatha's commentary on Sangitaratnākara that "amongst the earliest authorities we have, strictly speaking to start with, Kōhala himself for the tracing of Deśi' (P.17). According to Rāmakrishṇa Kavi who compiled and edited the Bharata Kōśa, Nṛttaratnāvali of Jayasena is one of the

best works on Nṛtya following Abhinavagupta and Kirtidhara for Mārgi and Matanga for Deśi.

It is significant that Jayasena who lived in South India followed the work of Abhinava - the Kashmirian, for Mārgi. Mārgi being common to all regions, attracted authorities to write commentaries irrespective of the region from where the text emerged. This itself is a proof of the Mārgi-Deśi link. Mārgi has been the common Sāstraic base for not only the Indian sub-continent, but the entire world of Hindu-Buddhist-Jain culture. It is worth quoting a personal discussion I had with Pūjyaśrī Sankara Vijayendra Saraswati Swamigal, the 70th Śāṅkarācārya of the Kañci Kāmakōṭi Pīṭham. The phrase he used for Mārgi and Deśi was "Nissima Mārgi (निस्सीम मार्गी) i.e., Mārgi of unlimited space and "Atulya Deśi" (अतुल्य देशी) i.e., limited to a region.

All the Deśis have connection with a Mārgi in one way or the other. There may or may not be an awareness about this link. Dr. Raghavan had drawn a parallel on the analogy of linguistic development. "After classical Sanskrit, several Prakṛts became literary media. Many non-Sanskrit technical terms in various regions of India which were developed during such transitional period were given a common term "Deśi" (p.116). It is interesting to note that many works on sangita restating Mārgi and codifying Deśi were also written in Sanskrit so as to draw the attention of all regions. Hence Deśi of one region naturally got percolated as

common Deśi elements into other provinces. Dr. Raghavan says that according to Kallinātha, Deśi is that which Bharata did not speak of, but Kōhala and others spoke about.

History shows that the Mārgi- Deśi link was again revitalised with a common goal of retaining the common cultural codes. An awareness about the Mārgi links was lost in North India from around the 12th century AD and in South India from the 14th century. Saint Vidyāranya in the South and Mahārāja Kumbharāṇa in Rajasthan tried to revive this consciousness. Their work was recorded in the forms of literature and sculpture. Yet the gap between Mārgi and Deśi continued. Catura Dāmōdara who wrote the Sangita Darpana in the 16th century realised the discrepancy that existed between theory and practice in his times. Some of the Rāgas mentioned in Sangita Ratnākara of the 12 century was not known in the 16th century.

A Muslim saint Akbar Shah has written a work, “Sṛṅgāra Rasa Manjari” in Samskrta in the latter half of 17th century AD. Though it is a work on poetics, it shows affinity with Mārgi concepts in Rasa and poetics as a whole. The author’s poetry is based on the Nāyika-Nāyaka theory of Bharata and other authorities. The editor Dr. Raghavan says that this subject was popularised among Muslim patrons. It is significant that in Muslim courts too, indigenous literature flourished. It is interesting to note that this Islamic saint begins his work with

verses saluting Gaṇapathi, Saraswati and other Hindu deities. This is yet another proof for the earnest desire that had sprung from time to time to recollect the common aesthetic codes of Bhāratavarsha.

Though the Mārgi tradition was the object of revival from the days of Swami Vidyāranya, it has not been a fulfilled task. The Darpaṇa literature on Abhinaya, Sangita and Nāṭya have all sincerely denoted the concept of just a reflection of an age old tradition; it in fact reveals some confusion in regard to analysis of concepts and terms. Some of the Deśi literature of more recent times, like for example the Hasta Lakshaṇa Dipika of unknown authorship, seem to suggest an unintentional discrepancy between age old tradition and contemporaneous understanding. That is perhaps the reason for the indiscriminate change in the identification of the hand gestures with the traditional terms for them. The Bālarāma Bharatam of Mahārāj Kārtika Tiruṇāl follows Bharata more authentically, though it is also a work from Kerala.

A need to revitalise Mārgi is perhaps imperative today, for regaining the common Bhāratīya identity. In our own time, Pūjyaśrī Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swāmigal, the 68th Sankarācārya of Kānci Kāmakoti Piṭham, took interest in all his 100 years of life, for resurrecting the various cultural facets of the ancient Hindu tradition. The revival of the common cultural codes were first contemplated by him, not only within India, but on a pan

Asian level. The relevant details of my having been a humble instrument in his holy hands in reviving the Mārgi will be dealt with in a later chapter. The study of the Mārgi-Deśi link is a study of the indivisible mono cultural substratum of India. The Nāṭya Veda is our common Veda in the world of performing arts.

The respective Deśis have been revived in post-independence India. If the awareness about Mārgi is rejuvenated, the Indian artists will not only be benefited artistically, but they will actually become torch bearers for the unity of our Indian culture.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR A NATIONAL APPROACH

The text of Nāṭya Śāstra has abundant material for a pan-Indian approach to the classical theatre. Apart from the total common technique and the artistic analysis in the psychology of using the various limbs of the human body, irrespective of the nationality, we can classify such pan-Indian material under three view points; they are:

1. Attitudes in artistic production and the analysis of geographic and ethnic traditions in taste, covering the whole Indian sub-continent.
2. The solution to language problem in production of plays.
3. Representation of ethnic groups in their proper respective attire and colours.

We shall deal with the above, one by one as seen in the text of Nāṭya Sāstra.

REGIONS AND TASTES :

The inter-relation ship between Vṛttis and Pravṛttis reveal the stupendous continuity of traditional tastes in dramatic presentation from time immemorial to this day. Vṛttis, as explained earlier are actions which are at the mental, verbal and physical levels. The “Bhāraṭi Vṛtti” is verbal activity. It includes proper use of language, intonation, diction, pronunciation, punctuation, and voice culture. The “Sātvati Vṛtti” pertains to the mental level. It may be speech through silence. It depends on the story content, characters and emotions radiated through subtlety, based on a deep mental involvement in all these. “Ārabhati Vṛtti” is the forceful activity of the body with spectacular scene settings, colourful costumes and thrilling combats. “Kaiśiki Vṛtti” is the graceful activity of the body in a romantic style with its strength derived from feminine grace, lilting music and pleasing dance. Indian theatre, no matter from which province it comes from, is nothing but a combination of these Vṛttis in varying degrees.

For example, the traditional theatre in Marathi, Tamiḷ, Telugu of Kannada have all had the best of singers who had admirers from the musical world until very recently. Against the backdrop

of the Vṛttis, it is interesting to see how the Indian cinema is the daughter of the Indian stage. This is explained in a later chapter.

PRAVṚTTI

The Pravṛttis are activities relating to thought, word and action peculiar to zonal traditional observances, born out of moorings, resulting in particularisation in taste. Bharata gives recommendation of specific Vṛttis for the four Pravṛttis, by dividing the whole of Bhāratavarsha - which was much larger than the present political boundary of India- into only four cultural zones. As mentioned earlier, Bharata names them as Pāncālī, Oḍṛamāgadhi, Āvanti and Dākshināṭya. The continuity of the zonal tastes of Rasikas of these regions to the present day is phenomenal. It is interesting to note that the Government of India has formed more than four zonal cultural centres for our present territory.

PĀNCĀLĪ PRAVṚTTI

Pāncālī includes the entire northern region. The Vṛttis recommended are Ārabhaṭi and Sātvaṭi. It is amazing how the Punjabis are still fond of the Ārabhaṭi style as evidenced in their dance of exuberance seen as a forceful artistic physical reaction to their mental joy in achieving their “Kanak”, the “Golden Paddy”. Who does not know this “Bhāṅga” dance today, as a forceful dance? The classical Kathak dance is known for its rhythmic

complexities in head-reeling speed. This is another example of the regional preference. But many do not know the link with their hereditary Ārabhaṭi taste of the Pāncālī Pravṛtti. Is Nāṭya Sāstra not a reality today? Now let us see the regions Bharata included for the Pāncālī Pravṛtti. I have tried to identify the names from “Ancient Indian Geography” and relate them to the present day.

Vāhlikā	- ie., West of Hindukush Mountains in Afghanistān
Kāśmirā	- Kashmir
Madra	- Lahore region in Pakistān. Now there is a town “Mandra” near Rāwalpindī
Uśinarā	- Himāchal Pradēsh
Sālvakā	- Alwar Jaipur region in Rājasthān
Sūrasena	- Āgra Mathura region West of Yamuna
Pāñcālā	- Western Uttar Pradēsh
Hastināpurā	- North East of Delhi

ODRAMĀGADHI PRAVṚTTI

It consists of the Bhārati and Sātvati Vṛttis. In other words, poets, play wrights and producers are advised by Bharata to present their performances either in verbal or emotional or combining both these styles to please the audience of this region.

It is again interesting to note the unbroken traditional taste for Sātvati and Bhārati in the Eastern region of India. The graceful and subtle flow of movements in Manipuri dances and even the “Santhāli” folk dances, sobriety in their facial expression and even the emotional style in their Bengali theatrical and cinematic forms with importance to flowery verbal expression as reflected in Tagore’s literature, have all a stamp of inherited concepts in artistry in that region. The Nāṭyaśāstra includes the following regions for Oḍramāgadhi

Nepāla	- ie., Central Népāl Katmandu region
Videhā	- South Eastern Népāl
Māgadhā	- Patna region of Bihār
Angā	- Bhāgalpūr, Monghyr region with Northern portion of Santal Pargānās
Pundrā	- Rangpur region in North Banglādesh
Malada	- Malda district of West Bengāl
Vangā	- Central Banglādesh
Pravanga	- Southern parts of West Bengāl and Banglādesh
Antargiri	- Rājmahal Hills region in Bihār
Bahirgiri	- Birbhum region in West Bengāl
Mallavartakā	- Hazāribāgh Govindpur region in Bihār
Brahmottara (or)	
Sumottara	- Murshidābād region in West Bengāl

Tāmraliptā	-	An island which existed West of the mouth of river Hooghly
Bhārgavā	-	Sikkim Bhūtān region
Prāgjyotishā or Kāmarūpa	-	now part of Assam Valley including Guwahati
Utkalingā	-	North Eastern Orissa
Oḍra	-	South of Utkalinga and North of Mahānadi
Mahendra	-	Northern part of the Eastern Ghats
Poulindā	-	Nāgpur region
Prānga	-	perhaps Mātanga ie., Bankura region of West Bengāl
Mārgavā	-	not identified
Vatsā	-	not identified

ĀVANTI PRAVṚTTI

Meant for the Western Cultural Zone, it included the Sātvati and Kaiśiki Vṛttis ie., both the emotional and romantic styles. Apart from the emotional approach of the Gujarāti plays and the Rājasthāni Folklore, the Western region has ever radiated the romance of “Hallasaka” and “Rāsa” dances from the days of Krishna to this very day in their Dāndiya Rās. The dryness of the desert of Rājasthān, has been more than compensated in the unlimited colours of their costumes and intricate craft of their jewellery. This is another Kaiśiki aspect showing the continuation of traditional taste. The regions included for Āvanti

Pravṛtti are :

- | | | |
|------------|---|---|
| Saindhavā | - | West of lower Indus river and South East of Bolan Pass in Pakistān |
| Sauveerā | - | East of lower Indus river-Khairpūr Bahawalpūr region in Pakistān |
| Saurāshtrā | - | Saurāshtra in Gujarāt |
| Ānartā | - | the coast line North East of Dwaraka in Saurashtra |
| Arbudeya | - | Arbuda or Mount Abu |
| Mālavā | - | Kōtāh and adjoining region in Rājasthān |
| Avanti | - | Ujjain region in Madhya Pradesh |
| Vidiśā | - | Vidisa in Madhya Pradesh near Bhōpāl |
| Tripurā | - | near Jabalpūr in Madhya Pradesh - probably the present Tewar |
| Daśārṇā | - | both mountain and river of the same name near Sāgar in Madhya Pradesh |
| Mṛttikāvat | - | probably Merta in Rājastān, West of Ajmer |

DĀKSHINĀTYĀ PRAVṚTTI:

The Dākshinātyā Pravṛtti of the Southern Zonal taste is made up of only Kaiśiki Vṛtti according to Nāṭyaśāstra, which explains the unlimited love for music and dance, the region continues to have. Though basically the whole of South India is soaked in the graceful style, Kerala alone seems to have inherited a combination of Kaiśiki and Ārabhaṭi taste, probably because of the

influence of their peculiar passion for the martial arts like “Kalarippaiṭṭu”. Moreover, their faith seen in the spontaneous dances under the spell of dead souls, combined with intense Tāntric practices have given a definite character of Ārabhaṭi even in their Kaiśiki based forms. The same shade spreads in to the “Sinhala dances” of Srilanka, now popularly called “Kandyan”. Otherwise the entire Southern region reflects the Kaiśiki taste with the Bhāgavata Méla tradition of Tamilnādu and Āndhra (Kuchipudi), the Bharatanāṭyam of Tamilnādu and Karnāṭaka, and the Yakshagāna of Karnāṭaka and Mōhini Āṭṭām of Kēṛala. Perhaps the geologists could take clues from the Nāṭya Sāstra, epics and purāṇās, to reconstruct the ancient Indian geography. The regions included under Dākshināṭya seem to refer to some parts of the land that is believed to have been submerged beyond the present Kanyakumari. The regions are given under two headings :-

i - Mountains of Dākshināṭyā Pravṛtti:

The Eastern Ghats are only a Northward continuation of the submerged Mahendra mountains.

Malaya mountains denote the Southern end of the present Western Ghats

Sahya mountains are the Northern part of Western Ghats

Mekala mountains are the Maikal range in Madhya Pradesh

Kālapañjara is perhaps modern Kālinjar

II - Countries of Dākshināṭya Pravṛtti

- Kosalā - perhaps Dakshina Kōsala, the area between
Nāgpur and Orissa, South of Mahānadi
- Tosalā - pūri district of Orissa
- Kalingā - Southern Orissa
- Āndhra - coastal Āndhra - Godāvāri Krishna, region
- Mosalā - Masūlipatnam region in Āndhra
- Dramiḍa - Tamilnādu
- Mahāvaiṅga - Krishnavenna river region including part of
Mahārāstra
- Vanavāsikā - Shimōga district in Karnātake.

In short, countries lying in between the Vindhyās and the Ocean are to take the Dākshināṭya Pravṛtti. From the point of view of dance art, Kalinga or Orissa seems to be a meeting point between the Dramida and Pravanga characteristics, for, it still retains the rhombus between the legs seen in Southern region as well as the deflections in the upper part of the body, normally featuring in the dances of Manipūr. In the same manner, we see the meeting point of North and South in the artistic traditions on the Western coast of India in both North and South Cānāra. Both Hindustāni music and the Dhārwar Kathak are standing examples. In South Cānāra, the “Bhūta Āṭṭa” with its general connections with the

Kēralite “Theyyam” (Deyvam) and the Underlying unity seen in Yakshagāna with Kathakali, blend like the mingling of shades on a single canvas. These are different aspects of Nāṭyaśāstra seen spread over every region as oral and practical traditions.

(2) TRESPASSING LINGUISTIC BARRIERS:

It is beyond any doubt that Sanskrit was the National language through which people from Himālayās to Kanyakumari communicated. As part of the “Divide and rule” policy, hardly a hundred years ago, it was dubbed as “Vaḍa Mozhi” meaning “North language”. Dr. N. Mahalingam has rightly pointed out that samskrta is *Vadal Mozhi* and not “Vada Mozhi”. “Vada” implies northern whereas the word “Vadal” means that which is refined. Samskrta literally means that which has been systematically refined. Hence this new concept of samskrta as a North Indian language has no base in the Nāṭyaśāstra. Like our own times, there were many Bhāshās (languages) and Vibhāshās (dialects) during the time of Nāṭyaśāstra. As part of training for actors, languages were taught from the alphabets so that aspiring playwrights and actors could know the use of language in communication. The Nāṭyaśāstra was meant, as mentioned earlier, as a guide not only to the actor, but to the poet as well. The play-writer was given guidance in his conception of verbal expression. Let us see how Bharata solves the language problem.

In contrast with our days, when there is technological progress along with mental regress, Bharata's days reflected human progress with mental faculties at the zenith of evolution. Languages were classified as:

Ati Bhāsha	- super human language
Ārya Bhāsha	- systematically refined language
Jāti Bhāsha	- languages of the commoners
Yōnyantara Bhāsha	- sub- human language ie., of animals and birds

1. Ati Bhāsha is Śrauta or Védic language, because the Védās were a product of spiritual revelation and not human composition.
2. Ārya is Arsha because it is a systematically refined language through the intellectual exercise of ṛshis. This came to be called as "Sanskṛta" meaning "well refined" (Sam + Kṛtam).
3. Jāti Bhāsha is "Laukika" because it is the language of the commoners . All the Prākṛts of Provincial languages come under this category.
4. Yōnyantara Bhāsha is the language of the sub-human strata and it is obvious that the ancient Indians has such closeness to nature. We understand that some research is being carried on now at USA on the language of animals and birds. It is a pity that we have lost the sources of those language in India.

From the above panorama of linguistics, we are able to experience an aweinspiring admiration for the unlimited broad-mindedness of our ancient Indians in sharp contrast with the contemporary scene. Bharata's theatre was a multi-lingual art. Both Sānskrit and Prākṛit were freely and relevantly mixed in the plays. He says that the super-human characters are to speak in Ati Bhāsha, King and nobles are to speak in Samskrta and the commoners are to be portrayed speaking the relevant Prākṛtās. Seven Prākṛtās belonging to seven regions are enlisted by harata. They are :

1. **Vāhlika** - Himālayan region
2. **Sūrasēni** - Mathura region ie, plains of UttarPradēsh
3. **Āvanti** - Western India
4. **Māgadhi** - (approx) present Bihar and parts of UttarPradēsh
5. **Prācyā** - Eastern India
6. **Ardhamāgadhi** - South Eastern India
7. **Dākshinātya** - Southern region

Apart from the above Bhāshās, Bharata mentions the less known dialects or Vibhāshās including, the speech of Sakārās, Ābhirās, Caṇḍālās, Sabarās, Dramidās, Odrās and those of the forest dwellers. Bharata prescribes different languages to portray

different characters. This shows that the actors had to be trained to speak all the major languages, so that they were good in verbal expression. The high flown as well as the low slang in the use of language was evidently kept in the minds of the play-writers as well. With Sāṅskrit as the connecting language, there were roving bands of actors, who toured around Bhāratavarṣa and acted the plays using Sāṅskrit and Prākritis. The Nāṭyaśāstra tradition of using more than one language in a play or dance drama is still seen in Kūṭiyāṭṭam and Bhāgavata Mēla. In Kūṭiyāṭṭam, the play in Sāṅskrit is enacted with gestures with the Vidūshaka explaining the same in Malayālam. Recently I heard the Cākiyārs speaking in Hindi instead of Malayālam, when they staged their play in Ujjain. The Tamilnādu, the Bhāgavata Mēla has all their songs in Telugu and sometimes their dialogues are in Tamil. Why not produce bi-lingual plays, operas and dance-dramas ? This will enable the artistes to reach out to the audience of respective regions. How did the actors of Nāṭyasastra days manage to communicate in all the regions ? It must be remembered that Sāṅskrit was the lingua- franca and the actors could speak more than one Prākrit. This was part of their training.

The biggest blunder we have committed in India is the discontinuance of Sāṅskrit education. This has substantially contributed to the disintegration of the Common Indian Psyche. This, one universally accepted national tie from time immemorial has

been unfortunately snapped, causing regional complexes and chauvinistic feelings about languages. With a Sāṅskṛit base, any North Indian language including Hindi and atleast thrēe of the South Indian languages could have been easily understood. Pushing and relegating the mother from her rightful place of importance has caused dis-unity among the children. Sāṅskṛit is a must for any serious artistic study and this alone will be an answer to our language problem. To a major extent, it continues to be the common language of the performing arts even today. The Sāṅskṛit Kavitās of Kathak dances is naturally more appealing to the Southerners than any Tumri. The Gita Gōvinda is another major link in the Bhakti theatrical world connecting Kērala with Manipūr, Bengāl, Orissa and almost every part of India. The “Krishnakarnāmṛta” composed by poet “Bilvamangal” who came from Dwāraka to Kērala, was carried by Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to Bengāl and later it got into Assamese and Manipuri dance world. The unity which is immanent in our soil, only needs to be recognised and there is no need to create any new integration. Sāṅskṛit study can not only present the picture of a unified India in its glorious past, but also contribute towards a more united future.

(3) ETHNIC AWARENESS:

Apart from listing the super-human beings, Bharata recommends specific colours for painting the faces of characters belonging to the entire world. In Bhāratavarśa, he gives specifica-

tions for the make-up of the following tribes.

The Kirātās, Barbarā, Āndhrās, Dramiḍās, Kāsis, Kōsalās and the inhabitants of South are to be painted Āsita ie., not white. This shows that the Draviḍās were neither dark, nor are they spoken of as a separate race.

Sākās, Yavanās, Pahallavās and Vāhlikās who live in North are to be made reddish yellow. The people who live closer to the colder regions of Himalayas are said to be naturally fair.

Pāncālās, Sūrasénās, Oḍrās, Magadhās, Angās, Vangās and Kalingās should be made dark or deep blue. The people of the sunny regions are naturally more tanned. Even the details regarding the beard and hair-do of different tribes are given. Unless there is a necessity for actors and play-writes to include all these characters, the Śāstra will not detail these points. Unless all these diverse sects and coloured people are thought of as belonging to one cultural entity, stories and episodes involving them would not have been conceived.

The above three view points namely the geographic, linguistic and ethnic perceptions converge in the Nāṭyaśāstra, as an internal evidence for a broad **Civilizational unity** that has been there from very remote times. We shall next see with just a few examples, as to how Bharata's work has strongly influenced Indian literature, Indian sculpture and the actual performing arts, which have been handed down through oral tradition.



CHAPTER - IV

NATYASASTRA AND INDIAN LITERATURE

(with special reference to Tamizh)

I was ordained to have the revelation of the oneness in the present multifaceted cultural mosaic of our vast sub-continent through an aerial view of Indian theatre. This has its parallel in K.S.. Srinivasan's intellectual exercise in the literary field, in his "The Ethos of Indian Literature _ A study of is romantic tradition". He writes: "Almost the first thing that dawned on me about the linguistic history of our country is that until about a thousand years ago, there were only three languages; works embodying all branches of knowledge - from astronomy and medicine to philosophy and poetry - were produced only in Prākrit, Tamil or Sanskrit. The need to unlearn what was learnt at school became immanent, as I reflected, do we know ourselves, really ? (*page 9)

It is generally accepted by all scholars of Indian literature, that all post Bharata commentators on poetry not only follow Bharata for the art of poetics, but even employ the terminology given by him. He was the first to give the Rasa Theory and it is not surprising

that all the present North Indian literature is influenced by the Nāṭyaśāstra, for, all these languages are accepted to be various Prākṛtaś of Samskrta. It is generally believed by some scholars that Tamizh has a structure which is totally independent of Samskrta. But there are also scholars who have established that it has an unmistakable link with Samskrta, through Prākṛta. Tamizh itself has been considered as Draviḍi Prākṛta by scholars like Rajendra Lal Mitra, a philologist of the nineteenth century, T.V. Mahālingam, an archaeologist, and currently by K.V. Srinivasan, a literary historian. It is heartening to have their comprehensive perceptions from different stand points, converging with my view point of history of our performing arts and its influence on the cultural matrix of our country. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee's towering work "Origin and development of Bengali language" includes points of similarity between Indo-Āryan and Draviḍian languages showing probable influence of the latter. It only indicates the multi way traffic, based on indivisible common ethos. These links only enhance the greatness and antiquity of both Tamizh and Samskrta.

NĀTYA SĀSTRA IN ANCIENT TAMIL LITERATURE:

Scholars like R. Swaminatha Iyer (in his "Dravidian Theories") and K.S. Srinivasan (in his "The Ethos of Indian Literature") have shown beyond doubt that there is a definite close connection between Samskrta and Tamizh through Prākṛta.

Swaminatha Iyer who served as a school master from 1880 made bold to point out the mistake of Bishop Caldwell; the second edition of Caldwell's book had appeared in 1875. The disconnection between Samskr̥ta and Tamizh was being propagated to ignite separatism through an intellectual conspiracy. K.S. Srinivasan has brought to limelight the fact that the structure of all Indian languages and their syntax are alike; this adds strength to my study of the parallels in ancient Tamizh literature for Nāṭya Śāstraic concepts. Only the two most ancient and relevant works of Tamizh literature viz., Tolkāppiyam - the Tamizh grammar and Silappadikāram - the Tamizh epic, are dealt with hereunder. The influence of Nāṭyaśāstra on Tamizh literature which sprang in later centuries, are not elaborated here for the simple fact that they are only a continuance of an earlier tradition of respecting the Nāṭya Vēda .

NĀTYASĀSTRA AND TOLKĀPPIYAM

Tolkāppiyam is the earliest extant gramatic literature in Tamizh. It is called "Tol" ie., ancient and "Kāppiyam," ie., the Prākṛta form of Samskr̥ta word kāvya or literature. Tolkāppiyam is said to be authored by a Muni by name Tṛṇadhūmāgni, who was a direct disciple of Sage Agastya. This work is agreed to be the earliest extant literature in Tamizh, the date of which is beyond the purview of this book.

While dealing with the topic of "Poruḷ" a whole chapter is

devoted to “Meippāḍu”. In other words the Meippāṭṭiyal is a part of Poruḷadhikāram. Though this is meant as a guide to poets, it is also of interest to the theatre artists. This chapter reflects a tremendous connection with the concepts of Bhāva and Rasa as dealt with in the Nāṭyaśāstra. It must be remembered that the Nāṭyaśāstra is the mother of Alankāra Sāstra, ie., poetics, that has percolated throughout India in post -Bharata period. Bharata was the first to give a psychological analysis of Bhāva and Rasa. The following is an abstract from my Tamizh paper comparing the Sūtras of Nāṭyaśāstra and Tolkāppiyam, which I had read with suitable demonstrations.

Meippāṭṭiyal means the skill to communicate to the people, the happenings of the world, in the most authentic manner. The other term for this skill is “Viral”. Perhaps it is because of this ability that the dancers of the Sangam age are referred to as Virali.

“Meippāḍu” is the equivalent of the Nāṭya Śāstra term “Bhāva”. It is called Bhāva because it makes one feel (भावयन्ति - Bhāvay-anti). The eight “Śuvais” born out of the Meippāḍus are a counterpart of the eight Rasās which blossom out of the eight Bhāvās. Both Bharata and Tolkāppiyānār do not include Śānta of Naḍuvu Nīlai of later days. The eight Śuvais are :

நகையே அழகை இளிவரன் மருட்கை
அச்சம் பெருமிதம் வெகுளியுவகையென்று
அப்புரல் எட்டே மெய்ப்பாடென்ப

Nagaiye Azhugai Ilivaran Marutkai
AccamPerumidam Veguḷiyuvagaiyenṟu
Appāl Ette Meippāḍenba.

The above correspond to Hāsyā, Karuṇā, Bibatsa, Adbhuta, Bhayānaka, Vira, Raudra and Srngāra Rasās. Śuvai means taste, and Rasa also implies the same. The first Sūtra of Meippāṭṭiyal says that by multiplying the eight Meippāḍus into four fold expansion, we get 32 Meippāḍus or Bhāvās. The explanation of the commentator takes this to be concept of Bharata's classification of Bhāvās into four viz.,

Vibhāva	-	cause
Vyabhicāri Bhāva	-	fleeting emotions
Anubhāva	-	effect of the emotions or the manifestations noted in the physical behaviour
Sātvikabhāva	-	Physiological reactions- horripulation, tears etc, caused by intense mental involvement

The above four are referred to in Tamizh as Śuvaipporuḷ, Śuvaivuṇarvu, Kurippu and Viral. The commentary called Pérāśiriyam states:

விறலெனினும் ஸத்துவமெனினும் ஒக்கும்

“Viraleninum Sattuvameninum Okkum”

which means that the terms Viral and Sattva are synonymous. Physical expression of tears through gestures is Kurippu, but Viral implies actual shedding of tears. “The Śuvai is born through a blend of the four kinds of Meippāḍus of Bhāvās. Hence we see the parallel terms for the psychological analysis found in the Nāṭya Śāstra.

For the blossoming of the Uvagai Śuvai ie., Śṛṅgāra Rasa, Tolkāppiyam enlists a set of ten Vibhāvas. They are, equality in the standard of the genesis, discipline, valour or conviction, age, physique, love, magnanimity, compassion and wealth. In another context it gives four Meippāḍus for the Uvagai Śuvai. They are Śēlvam ie., Bhōga or experience of worldly pleasures, Pulan ie., wisdom attained through knowledge, Puṇarvu ie., unison in passion and Vilaiyāṭṭu ie., sporting in rivulet, pond, grove and garden and such other pleasant environment. Together all the Meippāḍus include the Uddipana and Ālambana Vibhāvās of the Samskrta tradition.

The Vyabhicāri Bhāvās or the fleeting emotions that strengthen the basic Sthāyi Bhāva of Rati lead to the birth of the Śṛṅgāra Rasa. Tolkāppiyam speaks of Kaḷaviyal ie., secretive love and enlists the following Meippāḍus connected with it.

- 1) புகுமுகம் புரிதல் Pugumugam Puridal - is the
mutual gaze of love
2. Poṛinudal Viyarttal - is to perspire
பொறிநுதல் வியர்த்தல் in coy.
3. நகுநய மறைத்தல் Nagunaya Maṛaittal - is to control
oneself from smiling to hide one's love,
4. பிறர்க்கின்மை Piṛarkkinmai - is to loose the
ability to hide one's love from the understanding of others.

All these have their parallels in the Nāṭya Śāstra.

Next, when we move to the idea of wonder, the causes of "Marutkai" is said to be "Pudumai" literally meaning new, "Perumai" - very big, "Śirumai" - meaning tiny and also any one of these suddenly turning into another. The Meippāḍus which cause "Azhugai" (sorrow) are insult, loss of a near and dear one, losing status, and also loss of enjoyments. The causes for "Perumidam" are : - "Kalvi" (achievement through concentration), "Tarukkaṇ" (bravery), "Iraimai" (Happiness or contentment and abstaining from wrong practices even while suffering reverses in business) and "Koḍai" (giving in charity, one's life, body and limbs).

Ilivaran or Bibatsa is disgust for either others' or one's own self. Hāsyā also has these two varieties in Nāṭya Śāstra. Exaggeration is one of the causes for laughter. The above analysis found

in Tolkāppiyam clearly proves its conceptual allegiance to Nāṭya Śāstra as far as the Meippāḍu and Śuvai analysis is concerned. The one interesting additional analysis given in Seyiṟṟiyam is the idea of “Nilam”, when a particular Sthāyibhāva like Krōdha leads to totally another Sthāyibhāva like Śōka in the mind of the reader or spectator. A verse from Kamba Rāmāyaṇam can be quoted as an example to the idea of Nilam. When Rāvaṇa loses all his weapons in the battle field, Rama magnanimously says to him “you may go back now and return to the battle field tommorrow”. Kamban paints the Emperor Rāvaṇa of unparalleled achievements walking back to Lanka empty handed, “with a broad chest having been punched by war elephants; shoulders and arms mighty enough to life the Mount Kailas, a tongue which equals that of Nārada Muni in music, ten heads and bejewelled with crowns, with a sword gifted by Lord Śankara himself, and with all the glory of valour left behind in the battle field, Rāvaṇa returned to Lanka empty handed”. What a pathetic picture is seen as a result of a terrible war demanding Raudra. This is Nilam. Though the Nāṭyaśāstra does not give a technical term to this concept, the idea is amply exemplified in a ślōka which says that out of the eight Rasās, only four are primary and the others are born from them. The primary sentiments are Śṛṅgāra, Raudra, Vira and Bibhatsa. Mimicry of Śṛṅgāra leads to Hāsya, Raudra results in Karuṇa as we have seen in the

Kambha Rāmāyaṇam verse; Vira gives raise Adbhuta and Bibhatsa ends up in Bhayānaka. In this verse of Nāṭyaśāstra, the concept of Nilam as seen in “Seyiṭṭiyam” is already impregnated. In other words, the Sthāyibhāvās themselves act as Vibhāvās for strengthening other Sthāyibhāvās. Another example is the scene in Silappadikāram, the Tamizh epic, in which Kaṇṇagi’s anger burns the city of Madurai. It is Krōdha that leads to creating Bhayānaka in the minds of reader, ultimately reaching the point of pathos, in her having undergone the pain of losing her beloved husband. This will also amount to Ṇilam. One major difference between the Tolkāppiyam and Nāṭyaśāstra is that the former is *Kavi Sikshārtham* (कवि शिक्षार्थ) ie. meant to educate the poet, and the latter is “*Kavi Naṭa Sikshārtham*” (कवि नट शिक्षार्थ) ie., meant to instruct the poet as well as the actor. The former merely gives us the psychological analysis, but the latter gives the guidance to stage them and thus turn Śravya Kāvya into Drśya Kāvya ie., what is read or heard into what is seen and enjoyed. That is why the Nāṭyaśāstra gives details of how to perform the Anubhāvās (resultants), to establish the Vibhāvās (causes). Naturally this is absent in Tolkāppiyam, which is only a grammar for literature.

NĀṬYA ŚĀSTRA AND ŚILAPPADIKĀRAM

The art of dance had been an irresistable medium of expression of man’s inner composure and conflicts in many an old tribe of

the world characterised by a rustic spontaneity. It was an integral part of the social custom of the early Tamils. From the earliest of the extant Tamizh literature, it is clear that the dance of the period was either martial or that of spell in character. Some of the dances mentioned and briefly described in Tolkāppiyam and śāngam works are Varikkūttu, Karunkūttu, Vaḷḷikkūttu, Kazhanilaikkūttu and Tuṇangai. These are examples of the Deśi elements of the dance of ancient Tamils. The Śāngam works abound in allusion to the roving band of singers, dancers and actors known by different names like Kūttar (Actor), Pāṇar (Singer), Porunar (Poet), Āḍumagan or Āḍukaḷamagan (male dancer) and Virali, Āḍumagaḷ or Āḍukaḷamagaḷ (female dancer). The Āṟruppaḍai literature bears testimony for their nomadic nature as well as the royal patronage they enjoyed. But the actual technique that guided their performance is not described anywhere. The place of performance is called Āḍukaḷam and not Arangam. “Kaḷam” is strictly a Tamizh word meaning site. A sudden spur of classicism and love for codification seems to have arisen from the time of Silappadikāram. The work Kaḷam gets a Sānskritisised name ‘Rangam’ meaning stage with the Tamilized ‘A’ as prefix (Arangam). It is significant that Iḷango Aḍigaḷ has devoted a whole Silappadikāram with this heading viz., Arangēṟṟukkāḍai. Prof. Rajamāṇikkānar recognises the influence of Samskrta in the use of words like “Nāṭakam” to denote Kūttu, “Nāṭakamagaḷir” or Kūttumagaḷir for Virali, and

“Arangam” for Āṇḍukalaṁ. McDonnell and other scholars opine that “The words for actor (Nata) and play (Nāṭaka) are derived from the Prākṛta root “Naṭ”, the samskrta root is said to be ‘nr’ (to dance), The Rg Veda uses the terms Nṛtu to address divinity in the vocative of a dancer. It is interesting to compare the name of the Kashmirian dance presently called ‘Rov’ also pronounced as “Rouf”, accommodating a bevy of women at the same time. It is possible that from the Samskrta root Nṛ, N got dropped, and a suffix F got added perhaps through Arabic and Persian influence. While Kashmir continued to have the Sāmskrta influence, the South seems to have stuck to the Prākṛta root Naṭ. Naṭ is the root for Naṭa (actor), Naṭi (actress), Naṭigan (actor in Tamizh), Naṭigai (actress in Tamizh), Naṭṭuvan (dance conductor -cum- Teacher in Tamizh), Naṭṭuvāṅgam (art of the naṭṭuvan), Naṭanam (dance), Nāṭaka (Drama) and Nāṭyam (drama-cum-dance). It must be remembered that according to Bharata’s Nāṭyaśāstra, the word Nāṭya means the theatre art on the whole, and not just dance as often misunderstood.

According to Bharata, the terms Nṛṭta and Tāṇḍava are synonyms, used to denote the art of dance. As mentioned earlier, the Nāṭyaśāstra deals with the various aspects of dramatic art such as the art of communication called abhinaya, dance, songs, instrumental music, construction of stage, different kinds of auditoriums, poetics, Samskrta grammar, rules of prosody,

voice culture, intonation, psychological analysis of characters and also some interesting mythology with regard to the origin of Nāṭya and its elements. It describes ten major kinds of plays under the names of Rūpakas. The first Rūpaka is called Nāṭaka. Tamizh literature seems to have, at some point of time, absorbed this term Nāṭaka as one of its three main division of its classification as Iyal, Iśai and Nāṭakam. This classification must have been a result of a voluntary and total assimilation of the Nāṭyaśāstra into the Tamizh culture. If not, the well known and age old classification would have been as Iyal, Iśai and Kūṭṭu instead of Nāṭakam. This bears an irrefutable testimony for the open minded love for the best in beauty, quality and knowledge that our early Tamizh forefathers had, irrespective of the sources. The earliest extant literary evidence for the assimilation of the dance technique of Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra into Tamizh literature is Iṅgōvaḍigal's Silappadikāram. If one yearns to comprehend the real nature of the sophisticated dance of early Tamils from this epic, it is possible only through a correlated study of the Nāṭyaśāstra with it.

From a study of the dance aspect of Aḍiyārkunallār's commentary on Silappadikāram, it is not difficult to conclude that he must have lived around the later half of the 14th century. His commentary abounds in Deśi elements and his adherence to later works like Bharatasenāpatiyam further proves this. As

already mentioned earlier, with the end of the Cōzha rule in the 14th century and the invasion of Malik Kafur, many of the older traditions in music and dance got lost in Tamizhnāḍu. Political instability would result in economic and social disintegration as well. Hence, cultural pursuits had a period of lull during that time and some older works on the arts in both Samskrta and Tamizh went into oblivion. It was from this period that Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra became less understood and almost disappeared from practice. Among the many works that were written to revitalise the older glory, there were also commentaries and summaries. Perhaps Aḍiyārkkunallār also lived during this period of renaissance. This was the time when even the great old temples were also renovated, and enlarged. Aḍiyārkkunallār's knowledge of later works on dance is commendable, but his explanation of some of the technical terms found in Silambu, do not seem to be apt. The time that had galloped between Ilangō and Aḍiyārkkunallār cannot be over looked. Hence, if we want to identify those older terms relating to dance in the proper perspective, we have to turn only to the pages of Nāṭyaśāstra for guidance. Then we can realise the astounding close ties that Śilappadikāram has with Nāṭyaśāstra. This direct connection seen, even without the help of both the extant commentaries on Śilappadikāram, marks the starting point of the percolation of Nāṭyaśāstra in Tamizh culture. This epic

reflects unmistakably, the merging of the indigenous dance traditions with that of the Nāṭyaśāstra. Only a few examples are given below to show some of the technical terms in Silappadikāram relating to dance, which are borrowed from the Nāṭyaśāstra. In this process, the general character of the post-14th century commentaries (irrespective of Tamizh or Samskrta), which unfortunately suffer a lack of direct knowledge of the obsolete forms, is revealed. The terms discussed there are all from Arangeṟṟu Kāḍai of the epic. They are :

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------------|
| 1) பிண்டி | - | Pinḍi |
| 2) பிணையல் | - | Pinaiyal |
| 3) எழிற்கை | - | Ezhiṟkai |
| 4) தொழிற்கை | - | Tozhiṟkai |
| 5) கரணம் | - | Karaṇam |
| 6) சித்திரக்கரணம் | - | Cittirakkaraṇam |
| 7) மண்டிலம் | - | Maṇḍilam |

while delineating the qualifications of an ideal dance master, Ilango mentions that he must be an adept in:

பிண்டியும் பிணையலும் எழிற்கையும் தொழிற்கையும்

Pinḍiyum pinaiyalum ezhiṟkaiyum tozhiṟkaiyum (Line 18)

According to Adiyārkkunallār, Pinḍi means single hand gesture, Pinaiyal means combined hand gesture, Ezhiṟkai means hand used beautifully and Tozhiṟkai means hand at work. If

we turn our attention to Nāṭyaśāstra which is closer to Silappadikāram in relation to time, the following will be revealed.

1. Piṇḍi denotes group dance. Nāṭyaśāstra has mentioned various kinds of Piṇḍibandhās or group formation as in its fourth chapter.

2. Piṇaiyal indicates chaining. Hence it can be understood as Śṛṅkalika described in Nāṭyaśāstra, as one of the types of Piṇḍibandhās. The dancers are expected to dance joining hands and move close to each other.

3. The word “Kai” is a direct translation of the word “Hasta” used in Nāṭyaśāstra. The presently more popular word Mudra or Muttirai meaning sign, is borrowed from Āgamaśāstrās. The earlier and most exact term for hand gestures in Samskrta is only Hasta. Iṅgo’s usage of the term “Kai” is hence quite significant. Hastās are classified as Nṛtta Hastās and Abhinaya Hastas. Nṛtta Hastās are hand movement meant to beautify dance. Iṅgo has brought out his idea by aptly using the term Ezhiṛkai (Ezhil means beauty). These are thirty in number and are non-representational in nature.

4. Tozhiṛkai must be taken to mean Abhinaya Hastās. These have a specific purpose viz., conveying ideas. Hence they are representational in character. The Abhinaya Hastās are further classified as single hand gestures and combined hand

gestures. They are called Asamyuta and Samyuta Hastās respectively. Adiyārkunallār himself quotes an early verse in which he refers to the terms “Inaiyā viṇaikkai” and “Inainda vinaikkai” meaning the single and combined hand gestures with specific duty. Among the single hand gestures, one called Piṇḍi is also met with. Hence Adiyārkunallār probably got this single hand gesture mixed up with another Piṇḍi, which is totally different in concept. Iḷango’s lines

பிண்டி செய்த கை ஆடலிற் களைதலும்
ஆடல் செய்த கை பிண்டியிற் களைதலும்

Piṇḍi śeida kai āḍaliṛ kaḷaidalum

Āḍal śeida kai piṇḍiyiṛ kaḷaidalum

line 22 & 23

give further strength to my interpretation. It means that the hand gestures used in Piṇḍi must be avoided in Āḍal and vice-versa, those performed in Āḍal must not be repeated in Piṇḍi.

If Piṇḍi is taken to mean single hand gestures, these lines will not make any sense from the practical point of view. On the other hand, if we see it through the torch of Nāṭyaśāstra, we can understand that Iḷango emphasises the need for variety in choreography. I have practically demonstrated how a same line of a song is to be presented as a solo dance, and its structure changes when more than one dancer is involved. The solo Āḍals must

be conceived as totally different from the group Piṇḍis.

The next term of utmost importance is Karaṇam. While eulogising the capacity of the percussion instrumentalist, Iḷango paints a picture of his total harmony with the singer, string instrumentalist and the flutist.

வாங்கிய வாரத்து யாழும் குழலும்
ஏங்கிய மிடறும் இசைவன கேட்ப
கூர்உகிர்க் கரணம் குறிஅறிந்து சேர்த்தி

Vāṅgiya vāratu yāzhum kuzhalum
Yēṅgiya miḍaṇum iśaivana kētpa
Kūrugirk karaṇam kuṇiyarindu śērtti

-lines 50 to 52

The word Karaṇam has been completely ignored by both the commentators. It is taken only to mean the fingering technique of the percussion instrumentalist to act in harmony with song and flute. The Nāṭyaśāstra describes 108 dance movements called Karaṇās. It also speaks of Karaṇa as finger technique while dealing with the music instruments. It is obvious that Iḷango has made use of the term Karaṇa in both these senses. The necessity for Iḷango to describe the greatness of the accompanying musicians is only to enhance the main theme viz., the maiden performance of Mādhavi. Hence the phrase “Karaṇam Kuṇiyarindu śērtti” is highly significant. It should be

taken to mean that the drummer, while in synchronisation with the other musicians, was also playing according to the clue he received from the karaṇa that was being danced.

The term Karaṇa derives from its Samskrta root “krṇ” meaning action. According to Nāṭyaśāstra, Karaṇa is a combination of three elements viz., a Sthāna - posture for the body, a Nṛtta Hasta - movement for the hands and a Cāri - movement for the leg. Hence the Karaṇa is a unit of dance and many Karaṇās are woven to form dance pattern. Two Karaṇās make a Nṛtta Mātrkā; the longest combination consists of eight to ten Karaṇās when it is called Angahāra. Each Karaṇa is a movement and not a static posture. 108 such Karaṇās are described in the fourth chapter of Nāṭyaśāstra. These Karaṇās are of various qualities and are all common for both the sex. The Nṛtta or dance based on Karaṇās can be broadly classified as Laghu - flowing gracefully, Vishama - complicated and acrobatic and Vikāṭa - hilarious. The Karaṇās are to be used according to the characterisation, taking into account the inevitable psych-physic relationship. The Karaṇās are meant for “Vākyaṛthābhinaya” i.e. bring out the mood or meaning of the whole sentence through physical action. The Karaṇās are beautified through Rēcakās which are ultimately responsible for the artistry of these movement. They give the necessary soft and virile touch for these actions. Though the term Karaṇa is used in Nāṭyaśāstra itself to mean the fingering technique

as well, in this context this term seems to mean only the Nṛtta Karaṇa. The drummer will have to carefully observe the dancer and play the hard and soft strokes by taking the clue from the Nṛtta Karaṇās. It may also mean that the Karaṇās of finger technique must be corresponding with the Karaṇās of dance. This is exactly what Iṅgo means while speaking about the harmony of the accompanists with dance. Iṅgo uses the term Karaṇa again with the prefix “Cittira”

ஆக்கலும் அடக்கலும் மீத்திறம் படாமை
சித்திரக் கரணம் சிதைவின்றி செலுத்தும்

Ākkalum aḍakkalum mittiṛam paḍāmai
Cittirak karaṇam śidaivinṛi śeluttum

-lines 53 & 54

The drummer must compensate the deficiency in other instruments, subdue their sounds if they are too loud and at the same time he must not miss the beat, for, there should be no botheration for the performance of Cittirakkaraṇam. The commentator again takes the term to mean the fingering technique. The term Karaṇa certainly denotes Mādhavi's dance movements. The prefix “Cittira” is again more meaningful only in reference to the context of Pūrvaranga described in the Nāṭya Śāstra.

Pūrvaranga means the preliminary of a play. A whole chapter

is devoted for describing its rules. Bharata's Nāṭya is quite vedic in character, for an elaborate Yagña is described for the Pūrvarāṅga. This preliminary is called Suddha Pūrvarāṅga. The Karṇās which originated from Mahēśwara's dance may be performed instead of this Yagña, then it is said to be Citra Pūrvarāṅga ie., a varied preliminary or rather a pictorial Yagña. This speaks of the efficiency of beautiful dance. The word Citra used in connection with Karaṇa in Silappadikāram denotes the Pūrvarāṅga or invocation which Mādhavi performed in her Arangetiam. This also shows that the ritualistic aspect of the Karaṇās was already in practice as part of Tamizh culture during the age of Ilango.

The next technical term of dance is Maṇḍilam. This term is met with in Silambu in the context of the actual description of Mādhavi's dance.

கொட்டு இரண்டு உடையதோர் மண்டிலமாகக்
கட்டிய மண்டிலம் பதினொன்று போக்கி
ஐது மண்டிலத்தாற் கூடை போக்கி

Kottu iraṇḍu uḍaiyator maṇḍilamāgak

Kattiya maṇḍilam padinonru pōkki

Aidu maṇḍilāttar kūḍai pōkki

-lines 144, 145 & 153

The term Maṇḍila is explained by both the commentators as

the Maṇḍila-Nilaigal ie., the Maṇḍala postures. According to Nāṭyaśāstra, Maṇḍala means a combination of eight to ten Cāris. The cāris are the basic movements of the legs. But the works of 16th century like Abhinayadarpanam take the word Maṇḍala to mean the static postures of the body. While Maṇḍala is also mentioned in the Nāṭyaśāstra as one of the Sthānās or postures, the later works interchange these terms and mention the nomenclature “Sthāna” as one of the Maṇḍalās. This is ample proof for concluding that the commentators of Siḷappadiḱāram may have lived only after the 14th century ie., during the rēviv-alistic period after the end of Madurai Sultanate. While Iṅgo is describing Mādhavi’s dance, we naturally expect him to speak about more intricate aspects and not about the alphabet of the art. At the end of the performance of the Maṇḍalās only, she was given the coveted award of Talaikkōl. In short, Mādhavi seems to have performed a dance with ten parts plus the last cadence (Tirvu). These parts were in the form of Maṇḍilās. The basic elements for the Maṇḍalās are the Cāris. These are classified as Bhū Cāris or movements with foot close to the ground and Ākāśa Cāris wherein the feet are involved in leaps, jumps and lifting. Sixteen Bhūmi Cāris and sixteen Ākāśa Cāris are the foundation on which the Kaṇṇa movements are built. It is obvious that Adiyārkkunallār could not get the meaning of Maṇḍalās because, in another context, while describing the construction of the

stage, he says that the screen tied on the top is meant for those who come down through the Ākāśa Cāris. This shows how the older technique of dance had been forgotten and not understood during Aḍiyārkkunallār's time. Unless one views the Arangēṟṟukkāḍai through the lense of Nāṭyaśāstra, much of it would remain as riddles. It has been sufficiently proved that Ilango has been undoubtedly influenced by Bharata. A more tacit proof for the above conclusion is the fact that Ilango has heartily shown his reverence for Nāṭyaśāstra on more than one occasion in the Arangēṟṟukkāḍai itself. With regard to the qualification of the singer, he says that he must adhere to the rules laid down in the Nāṭṭiyanannūl:-

Nāṭṭiyanannūl nangu kaḍaipidittu - line 40

Again he uses the very same words to show how Madhavi danced strictly according to the Nāṭṭiyanannūl :-

நாட்டிய நன்னூல் நன்கு கடைப்பிடித்துக்
காட்டினாள் ஆதலின்

Nāṭṭiyanannūl nangu kaḍaippidittuk

Kattinaḷāḍalin

-lines 158 & 159

It was because she danced according to the Śāstra, that the Cōzha king awarded her the title of Talaikkōl. Is it not logical to conclude that the Nāṭṭiyanannūl indicates only Bharata's

work ? Otherwise it would have been called Kūttanūl and not Nāṭṭiyanannūl. “Nannūl” implies grammar as evidenced from the title of another Tamizh work “Nannūl Kāṇḍigai”

Silappadikāram reflects its adherence to Bharata in its concept of music, musicians and their required qualities also. See the integrated presentation of music and dance in the following verse :-

குழல்வழி நின்றது யாமே; யாழ்வழித்
தண்ணுமை நின்றது தகவே; தண்ணுமைப்
பின்வழி நின்றது முழவே; முழவொடு
கூடிநின்று இசைத்தது ஆமந்திரிகை
ஆமந்திரிகையோடு அந்தரமின்றி
கொட்டி ரண்டுடையதோர் மண்டிலமாகக்
கட்டிய மண்டிலம் பதினொன்று போக்கி
வந்தமுறையின் வழிமுறை வழாமல்
அந்தரக்கொட்டுடன் அடங்கிய பின்னர்

Kuzhalvazhi ninṇadu yāzhe; yāzhvazhit
Taṇṇumai ninṇadu takave; taṇṇumaip
Pinvazhi ninṇadu muzhave; muzhavoḍu
Kūḍininṇu iśaittadu āmāntirikai
Āmāntirikaioḍu andaraminṇi
Kottiraṇḍuḍaiyadōr maṇḍilamāgak
Kaṭṭiya maṇḍilam padinonṇu pōkki
Vandamuṇaiyin vazhimuṇai vazhāmal
Andarakkottuḍaṇ aḍangiy pinnar

lines 139 to 147

The above verse shows that the flute, harp and percussion

instruments sounded in great harmony as Mādhavi danced the Maṇḍalās in eleven parts. She is said to have performed all these with proper adherence to Nāṭya Śāstra (see lines 158 & 159). Ilango's poetic description of the technique of the orchestrates symphony for synchronisation with dance is obviously an inspiration from a verse from Nāṭyaśāstra. This is what is said with regard to Antaramārga. It reads as :-

अङ्गोपाङ्ग समायोगं गीत ताल लयान्वितम् ।

भाण्ड वाद्य समं चैव यस्मिन् तत् समुच्यते ॥

Angōpāṅga samāyagōam gita tāla layānvitam

Bhāṇḍa vādyā samam caiva yasmin tat samucyate

-NS-Ch.27 - 82

The Antaramārga of Nāṭyaśāstra perhaps came to be referred to, in inscriptions of Tamizhnādu as Ahamārga, as certain types of dances to be performed in the temples as part of worship in the medieval period.

THE POST-SILAPPADIKĀRAM PARALLELS IN TAMIZH AND SAMSRITA WORKS

The post-Silappadikāram literature in Tamizh has enormous influence of Bharata even with regard to poetics. The entire Indian Alankāra Śāstra has a mother in Nāṭya Śāstra. I am only pin-pointing its relationship with Tamizh literature for the simple

reason of proving that Tamizh has also enjoyed, like the other languages, a bondage with samskrta. The imaginary gap was created only in the last 150 years as a deep rooted intellectual conspiracy of the aliens to divide us for their easy rule. In fact, an astonishing range of metres given in Nāṭyaśāstra had been and are still seen as a living tradition in all the Indian languages. But generally there is no awareness about this link. Here are a few examples to show the influences of Nāṭyaśāstra on Tamizh literature as a whole and also on Tamizh works on the art.

Poet Kamban, in his Rāmāyaṇa, while describing the glories of Ayōdhya, mentions the dancers who are dancing so charmingly. He says:-

கைவழி நயனம் செல்ல

Kaivazhi nayanamśella

கண்வழி மனம் செல்ல

Kaṇvazhi manamśella

This is obviously taken from the famous quotation from Bharata's work which read as :-

यतो हस्ततो दृष्टि

Yatō hastastato dṛṣṭi

यते दृष्टिस्ततो मनः

Yatō dṛṣṭistatō manah

Both these quotations mean - Where the hand goes, there go the eyes and where the eyes go, the mind follows.

It is equally interesting to take cognisance of the fact that all

texts specially dealing with music and dance, show allegiance to Bharata in almost all parts of India. Unfortunately, in the recent decades, there has been a doubt about this affinity in Tamizhnāḍu alone. To prove that there is no basis for this doubt, here is a quotation from the “Pañca Marabu” which can easily be taken as the earliest of the extant works in Tamizh on music and dance. The chapter relating to dance begins with an acknowledgment to Bharatamuni for the source material from his Samskrta work.

Coming to the practical aspect of the Karaṇās, it is interesting to note certain parallels in Tamizh and Samskrta works. The Nāṭya-śāstra describes Sthāna (a static posture for body) as a constituent element of Karaṇa. The Tamizh works describe the same as Nilai. Apart from Bharatasēnāpatiyam and Pañcabhāratiyam referred to in Aḍiyārkkunallār’s commentary on Silappadikāram, (both of which contain the name of Bharata in their very titles) U.V. Swaminatha Iyer often follows and quotes the “Suddhānanda Prakāśam” which is another Tamizh work on dance. Where ever the complete quotations are not available, this work has been utilised to throw more light on the subject. While describing the rules for the various kūṭṭūs, Aḍiyārkkunallār quotes the following from an early work

அறுவகை நிலையும் ஐவகை பாதமும்
ஈரெண் வகைய வங்கக் கிரியையும்
வருத்தனை நான்கும் நிருத்தக்கை முப்பதும்
அத்தகு தொழில் வாசு மென்ப

Aṟuvagai nilaiyumaivagai pādamum

ireṇ vagaiya vangak kririyaiyum

Varuttanai nāṅum niruttakkai muppadum

Attagu tozhila vāgu menba

The six “Nilais” are the same as the six Sthānās of Bharata’s work, Śuddhānanda Prakāśam also gives the same names; they are: Samam, Vaishṇavam, Vaiśākam, Maṇḍalam, Āliḍam and Pratyāliḍam. The five pādams or feet variations given in the Tamizh work are: Samam, Udgaḥṭṭitam, Kāñcitam, Kuñcitam and Sañcāram. The terms Kāñcitam and Sañcāram must be the same as Añcitam and Agratalasañcaram respectively of Bharata’s work, perhaps wrongly copied from the palmleaf manuscript. Some of the sixteen Angakriyās mentioned in the Tamizh and Samskrta works, are as follows.

Tamizh	Samskrta	Description
Samakali	Samam	- normal posture of the feet.
Sarikai	Sarika	- moving the feet as Sama without lifting
Kuttanam	Kuttanam	- stamping with the heel, toe

		or sole
Suvattikam	Svastikam -	crossing the feet
Vēṭṭanam	Vēṣṭanam -	encircling one leg with the other

The four “Varuttanai” mentioned in the Tamizh works are the same as the four Hasta Karaṇās of Samskrta, they are: Apavēṣṭitam, Upavēṣṭitam, Vyāvartitam and Parivartitam. The thirty Nṛtta Kai (hastās) are all exactly same as in Nāṭyaśāstra. Aḍiyārkkunallār explains Meikkūttu as that which is based on love theme; it is also called Ahamārgam and it is of three kinds viz., Deśi, Vaḍugu and Singaḷam. The same term Ahamārga is met with in the Samskrta work Bharatārṇava of Nandikēśvara. We have already seen the possible connection between Antaramārga of Nāṭyaśāstra with Ahamārga of the Tamizh country. In the context of Aḍiyārkkunallār’s reference to Deśi, Vaḍugu and Singaḷam, they must be understood respectively as Ahamārgam of Tamizh, Telugu and Simhala regions. The rest of the regions of India like Manipur (as evidenced from the work Gōvindalila Vilāsam), Rajasthan, Orissa, Kashmir, Karnataka and others have proudly proclaimed their allegiance to Nāṭyaśāstra.

BHARATA AND BHASA IN CERA COUNTRY

It must be remembered that Kerala was part of the Tamizh country under the name of Cēranāḍu in ancient India. Silappadikāram has mentioned the Cākkiyār’s art of Nāṭya in the Cēra

territory (Vanjikkāṇḍam - Naḍukaṛkāḍai - lines 69 to 77) thus revealing the uninterrupted artistic tradition of this community in Kerala to this day, from every early times. A Kūṭṭa Cākkaiyan of Paraiyur is said to have performed Kotticchēdam, which is meant to express the concept of Ardhanārīśwara. This would mean a combination of Uddhata and Sukumāra prayōgās of Karaṇās of Nāṭyaśāstra, on the right and left halves of the same dancer. Ilango also mentions that the Cākkaiyan could express in a thousand ways with only his eyes. This is yet another proof for the continuity of the expertise of the Cākkaiyārs of Kerala with regard to Nētrābhinaya to this day. It must be remembered that the Tamizh epic silappadikāram is the common heritage of the ancient Cēra, Cōzha and Pāṇḍiya. The influence of Nāṭyaśāstra found in this epic would naturally mean that all the above mentioned three regions had inherited this bible of performing arts in their respective traditions.

In Kerala, the Hastalakṣhaṇa Dipika, a more recent work of unknown authorship has quite a lot of difference in the naming of the hand gestures, when compared to Nāṭyaśāstra. This may be due to unintentional errors, in the process of trying to rescue a dying and forgotten art form. For that, even Nandikēśwara's Abhinaya Darpaṇam (a post-14th century work) has erred with regard to the usage of the terms for Sthanās. It was surely not an intentional discrepancy from the Nāṭyaśāstra. In Kerala, Mahā-

rāja Kārtika Tirunāl's Bālarāma Bharatam is more authentic for it carefully follows Bharata. With regard to the exaggerated difference between Bharata and Bhāsa in reference to introduction of death in drama, a little more balanced thinking seems to be necessary. It is believed that Bharata does not allow cutting, piercing etc., and portrayal of death on the stage and hence some scholars have been over emphasising the discrepancy between Nāṭyaśāstra and Kūṭiyāṭṭam of Kerala. It is also believed that since Bhāsa's plays include scene where such violence and death is to be portrayed, he was a rebel, who disobeyed Bharata's principles. Through a careful study of Nāṭyaśāstra, with practical application, I beg to differ from this opinion which has caused an unwarranted imaginary gap between the Nāṭyaśāstra on one side and Bhāsa and Kūṭiyāṭṭam on the other. Variations between the Mārgi theories and the present Deśi practices are common to all forms of dramatic and dance forms of India.

It is true that Bharata has stated that, on the stage, fight should not include actual piercing, cutting or flow of blood and actual striking. The use of weapons should be represented by the use of gestures, suitable to the roles. This is what he says with regard to the Maṇḍalās or the dance movements meant for depicting fighting sequences. In the chapter describing the Cāris (XI-87) he adds the above instruction after describing how the movements are to be embellished through music and Sausṭava of

limbs. The prohibition of violence in reality, is unfortunately misunderstood as a rule to avoid enactment of the same. A Śāstra which includes every aspect of life and creation, taking into its fold all the three guṇās, will surely not prohibit scenes of Rajōguṇa; but it naturally cautions the actors not to get emotionally worked up, and end up the scene in real murder. Is it not a very sane and important advise for the actors?

The chapter that deals with Citrābhinaya has verses on how to enact death. It includes the details of action for death caused by varied circumstances such as the cutting of the neck. The contents of these verses seem to have been guiding the Cākkīyārs, who seem to have learnt by rote, to enact death sequences in an elaborate manner. They may not have been aware that these details are mentioned in the Nāṭyaśāstra itself.

I have heard from Sri. L.S. Rajagopal * that he has recognised atleast ten ślōkās from the Jarjarapūja of the Pūrvaranga of Nāṭyaśāstra being used by the Cākkīyārs of Kūṭiyāṭṭam. But he said that they may not know the original source for these verses. Hence, I hope the imaginary gap between the Keralite tradition and Nāṭyaśāstra, will be removed soon from the minds of the arts lovers.

What we need today is an awareness about the fact that the Vindhyas were never a barrier between North and South. If ancient

Tamizh literature itself is reflecting this common psyche, after all Kerala, which is accepted by all, to have a bondage with Samskrta and Tamizh is most naturally a home of Nāṭyaśāstra. Among the forty and odd manuscripts of the text collected from various parts of the Indian sub-continent, some of them were restored from Malabar when the Nāṭyaśāstra was edited by Rāmakrishna Kavi. Does it, not prove the devotion of the Southern region for the Nāṭya Vēda ?



* For more details - consecration of Kuttampalam - L.S. Rajagopal - Samskrta Ranga Annual No.8, 1980-87 PP22-40- Editor

CHAPTER-V

NATYA SASTRA AND THE AGAMAS

Āgamas are texts which deal with the rules of architecture, iconography, rituals and worship in relation to temples. The Sthapati is one who is an adept in the first two aspects, and hence a combination of an architect, engineer, painter and sculptor. Though he is not all-in-all in the rituals, he is also connected with the consecration of the deities. The connection that Āgamās have with the Nāṭya Śāstra is summarised below under the heads of architecture, iconography and worship

1. ARCHITECTURE:

It has been a great experience to study the chapter on the construction of the stage cum auditorium denoted by Bharata through the term "Ranga". Having served as a visiting lecturer at the college of Temple Architecture and Sculpture, Mahābalipuram, it has been a privilege to discuss in detail the architectural terms and measurements given in the Nāṭya Śāstra, with Sri. Ganapati Sthapati, the then Principal of the College. Oh more than one

occasion, we have addressed the students of traditional architecture, jointly, followed by discussion and participation by both students and other teachers there. The architectural terms, which were Greek and Latin to me, were immediately recognised by the students who are trained in traditional architecture. The amazing oneness of terms for measurement and the parts of the structure were for the first time compared between Nāṭya Śāstra and the Śilpa and Vāstu Śāstrās. Though the details are beyond the purview of this work, Sri. Ganapati Sthapati even made diagrams of Ranga, based on Nāṭya Śāstra. Unless one is endowed with the āgamic background, a mere attempt to reconstruct Bharata's theatre will not yield authenticity. Bharata speaks of three types of Rangas multiplied by three, based on their size, ie., amounting to nine kinds of theatres. Even the rules with regard to the choice of earth, right astral relationship in time for the beginning of work called "holding the thread" to measure, the do's and don't's in these actions, are all very close to the tradition of the temple architects.

The erection of the four main pillars in which the presiding deities are those of the four Varṇas - Brahma, Kshatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra, shows the equality of the groups and their sociological unity on matters relating to patronsing Nāṭya. The consecration of the Ranga and installation of the Dēvatas in relation to space and structure will be seen later.

2. ICONOGRAPHY

The twin arts of dance and sculpture have grown together under the divine shade of our temples in every nook and corner of our country. Indian iconography has been carefully guided by Indian aesthetics and hence all the Āgama Śāstrās are influenced by Nāṭyaśāstra.

The concept of divinity as a dancer has blossomed even during the Ṛg Vēdic period, which got crystalised in the shape of Lord of Dance - Natarāja, much later. Apart from Śīva, several other deities of the Hindu pantheon were conceived as dancing Gods. Some of them are Indra, Maruts, Gaṇēśa, Kārthikēya, Kṛishna, Manmatha, Pārvati, Durga, Kāli, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. Among the super-human beings, there are artists conceived as Apsarās, Gandharvās, Kinnarās and even the Pramathagaṇās of Śīva. Each deity is prescribed specific postures in consonance with the respective character and form. It is exactly in this context that the Nāṭyaśāstra gets infused into the Śilpaśāstra. The hand gestures called the "Hastās" in dance and sculpture are called "Mudrās" in Tantra. The sculptor had to study Nāṭyaśāstra as a major part of his syllabus.

The Indian concept of beauty has been based on laws of symmetry and proportion. This concept is the sub-stratum in both the arts of dance and iconography, which includes painting

and sculpture. That is why a beautiful dancer is eulogised as, "sculpture coming to life" and vice versa, ideal sculptures are described as "dancer throbbing with life". There are dance sculptures and dance-like sculptures; the later may be portrayal of prosaic scenes like writing a letter or applying a Tilaka, seen all over India. An underlying unity is often perceived in these figures inspite of recognising definite characteristic in the architectural styles of different regions and periods. A major factor which has often escaped cognisance is the timeless nation-wide adherence to Nāṭyaśāstra.

The concept of "Apsara", the celestial dancer seems to have been responsible for grace and fluidity in the body lines, in both Indian theatre and sculpture. AP+Saras means water and movement ie., moving in water. It denotes the femininity, softness and beauty as the characteristics of the water nymphs. Bharata says that the Apsaras were created by Brahma to perform in "Kaiśiki Vṛtti". The concept of Apsara is seen right from the Védic age. The evidence of its constant inspiration for dance and sculpture and the very concept of feminine grace seems to have remained unchanged, crossing limitations of time and space in India. A sense of continuity can be seen in the evolution of image making, wherein more or less the same dance posture is seen to have captured the attention in North, Central and South India, during the course of a few thousands of years. A broken

bronze image of a dancer unearthed at Mohenjodāro has the right hand on the waist with the left hanging down, with the tall slim legs in, what is described as “Āyata Sthāna” in Nāṭyaśāstra. “Āyata”, “Avahitta” and “Aśwagrānta” are the three postures mentioned by Bharata specially for portraying feminine grace. The Mohenjodāro dancing figure reflects one of these. It is not a sheer coincidence that Kālidāsa, the great Sāṅskṛit dramatist describes the very same posture, when he paints a verbal picture of how Mālavika stood after dancing. It is the same posture caught in the South Indian bronzes of the medieval age, to portray our Divine Mother in all serenity and grace. It is the very same posture seen in almost all the present Indian Dēśi or regional dances of today without exceptions. This astonishing continuity of the concept of beauty shows the ever lasting link with Nāṭyaśāstra.

Dance has influenced sculpture so deeply that the fundamental principle of filling up space has to be based on symmetry and proportion for both arts. The term “Sausṭava” used in Nāṭyaśāstra is comparable to Tālamāṇa and Pramāṇa in Śilpa Śāstrās. The grace of dance is reflected in the flow of lines in the sculptures, which are dance-like, even while portraying prosaic scenes like applying a tilaka, putting up the tresses etc.,.

Though there are dance sculptures following Nāṭyaśāstra, seen in both Hindu and Jain temples all over India, five temples in

Tamilnāḍu have the pride of authentic stone codification of the 108 Karaṇās described in the fourth chapter of Nāṭyaśāstra. Karaṇās are basic units of movements. These are seen carved in the following places:-

1. Br̥hadiśwara temple	Tanjāvūr	11th century
2. Sārṇgapāni temple	Kumbakōṇam	12th century
3. Natarāja temple	Chidambaram	13th century
4. Arunācalēśwara temple	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	15th century
5. Vrddhagiriswara temple	Vrddhāchalam	perhaps 16th C

The first two are seen as figures of Śīva and the rest are those of his consort. Kumbakōṇam figures have the numbers and names of Karaṇās inscribed, while Chidambaram temple has their definitions quoted from Nāṭyaśāstra. In short, these are visual libraries of permanent value for the study of Bharata's work. What is even more amazing is that the Chidambaram sculptures faithfully follow Abhinavagupta's "Abinavabhārati" which is a commentary on Nāṭyaśāstra from Kashmir.

It is obvious that all the existing Āgamās have derived much from the Nāṭya Śāstra. Though this can be seen in various deities, it is pronounced in the case of the images of Lord Śīva. To sum up, the images of Śīva are of five classes, namely the Samhāramūrti (destructive aspect), the Anugrahamūrti (boon conforming aspect), the Nṛttamūrti (dancing aspect), the Dakṣiṇāmūrti

(the yogic, musical and philosophical aspects) and other minor aspects. Among these, the Lord's dancing postures are associated with not only Nṛttamūrtis, but they are merged with the Samhāramūrti too. Some of the Śaiva Āgamās including Śilparatna state that Śiva danced in a hundred and eight modes, but content themselves with the description of nine modes only, as it is very difficult to describe all. Among these the first is the most widely known figure of Naṭarāja, ie., the Ānanda Tāṇḍava icon. This and the following three are practically the same from the point of view of Bharata's Karaṇās. All four of them are only the representation of the 24th Karaṇa called Bhujangatrāsitaṁ. It is interesting to note that Ānanda Tāṇḍava form is referred to only as Bhujangatrāsitaṁ in Rauravāgama, Sakalādhikāra, Ajita-gama and Kāranāgama. Another noteworthy point is that Ajitāgama, Rauravāgama, Sakalādhikāra, Kāranāgama and Śilparatna refer to the Lord's dance as Nṛtta and not Tāṇḍava as popularly referred to. According to Abhinavagupta's commentary, the Nṛtta Karaṇa called Bhujangatrāsitaṁ is a movement which resembles the situation of being frightened of a serpent which is near the leg. Though it is not fear that is portrayed, most invariably Lord Śiva is represented with his leg lifted up in the presence of one of the many serpents near his feet in this context, as mentioned in the Āgamās. According to Kāmikāgama, Śiva's right foot is placed on the Apasmāra who

is also in the company of many serpents. Both Śilparatna and Sakalādhikāra mention that the Apasmāra must carry a serpent in his left hand and show the mudra (sign) of the same (Sarpaśīras hasta) with his right hand. Sakalādhikāra mentions that the beginning of the embryonic universe Śiva danced in the midst of the celestials under the banyan tree. When he was bitten by the serpent Kārkōta, he performed the Bhujangatrāsita Nṛtta. The metaphysical and philosophical interpretations of this form of dance, as perceived by the Śaivite saints must have been preceded by this Purāṇic construction being given an āgamic visualisation. The choice of the Karaṇa to represent this situation bears testimony to the sculptor's knowledge of the Nāṭyaśāstra. Incidentally it is interesting to note that there was a Kārkōta dynasty which ruled in Kashmir.

Apart from Bhujangatrāsita, some of the other Karaṇās which we come across among the Śiva Tāṇḍavās are Caturam in the form of Sandhyā Tāṇḍavam, Daṇḍapādam or Lalāṭaṭilakam of Viṣṇukrāntam in ūrdhva Tāṇḍava, Ūrdhvajānu in Kālārimūrti and Apakrāntam in Gajasamhāramūrti. Urdhvatāṇḍava is called Uddaṇḍa and Atyuddaṇḍa Nṛttās in Rauravāgama. Apart from those described in the Āgamās, we do come across several dancing forms of Siva, which have posed problems in identification. These need the help of the Nāṭya Śāstra for interpretation. Invariably they fall under the definition of some

of the 108 Karaṇās. The only scholar who attempted to recognise such figures against the backdrop of Bharata's work was T.A. Gopinatha Rao. He has identified a handful of Nṛttamūrtis in his monumental work. "The Elements of Hindu Iconography". Among these, he has included the description of a sculpture of Śiva in a seated posture, from the Kailāsanātha temple at Kānchi. Towards the end of his chapter on Nṛttamūrtis, he has confessed that he is not able to connect this figure with any of the Tāṇḍava or Karaṇa descriptions. This figure can be identified as either Grdhrāvalinakam or even Kuñcitam; this multi-armed figure is seen resting on the floor with the shank and toes of the right foot lifted. The Kailāsanātha temple of Kānchi belongs to the 8th century. A replica of this figure is seen at Paṭṭaḍakkal belonging to the Western Chālukyas, also of the 8th century and another similar figure can be at Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, belonging to medieval period. This shows the remarkable unity that had existed in the dance styles of various regions, because of the meticulous adherence to Nāṭya Śāstra, as well as the overall hold of this great Śāstra on Indian Iconography. Irrespective of the actual reference in any Āgama, the dance sculptures as well as the dance-like sculptures which belong to the style of the Orient as a whole, can be easily identified with the torch of the Karaṇās, Sthānās and Cāris. To just cite some examples, the sculptures of Nepal, Srilanka, Indonesia and Thailand as well as the living

traditions in their performing arts clearly reveal an unmistakable influence of Bharata's Nāṭya Śāstra on them.

The genetic relationship Indian iconography has with Nāṭya-śāstra cannot be considered as chance. Wherever the light of Hindu culture spread, the Nāṭya Śāstra has also had its role to play. Otherwise the following similarities cannot be comprehended. Here are just a few examples.

1. "Cakramaṇḍalam" (Karaṇa No.53) from Chidambaram (13th century) seems to be like a copy of a painting (1500 BC) of an exercise called "hbj" in Egypt belonging to the Middle and New Kingdom. (Ref: Illustration from Curt Sachs - "World History of Dance")
2. "Vidyudbhrantam" (Karaṇa No:65) is an Ākāśa Cāri or movement in the air denoted by the very name, depicting lightning. The Similarity between this movement and another one from Russian classical ballet is striking. Both these are seen in Indian sculptures portraying the flying celestials like the Gandharvās.
3. "Mayūralalitam" (Karaṇa No.80) as portrayed in the Tanjāvūr series has parallels in the Thai dances. The same Karaṇa is sculpted as Mayūrāsana in the Kumbakōṇam series. A very similar postures is seen in a painting from Tibet. (Ref: Illustration from Giuseppe Tucci - "Trans Himalaya")

Many more examples can be given from other regions like Népal, where the Karaṇa “Vishṇukrāntam” is described as “Vishṇuvikrānt”. The same movement is still a living tradition in the Kalarippaiṭṭu of Kērala, which has given its shade to Kathakali. These few examples will suffice to show the definite stamp of Nāṭyaśāstra on Indian sculpture.

It is not worthy that the pre-13th century iconography, by which term both painting and sculpture are included, has a tie with the Mārgi tradition of the Nāṭya Śāstra, irrespective of the region they belong to. Even in post -13th century the earnestness in retaining the Mārgi link, is seen in the buildings and writings of King Bhoja of Rajasthan and those of the Vijayanagara period in the South. The Tiruvaṇṇāmalai Gopuram of Tamizhnāḍu containing Karaṇa figures and the Kirtisthamba of Bhoja in Mewar belong to this category. The extraordinary similarities between the postures found in paintings and sculptures form the Himalayan region to down South, and from the Western end to the Eastern extreme of our Bhārat is ample proof for the common cultural ethos of our sub-continent.

A sculptured panel in the second tier of Dharmarāja Ratha at Mahābalipuram has been identified by Sri K.R. Srinivasan as that representing Śiva and Taṇḍu. Here we see Śiva with four arms and Taṇḍu learning the art with great reverence. Regarding the date of this Ratha, K.R. Srinivasan concludes, that it was.....”

stated by Māmalla (Narasimhavarma I:630-668 AD) late in his region, was continued in the brief period of his successor Mahendra II (668-670 AD) and extended far into the period of Parameśwara I (670-700 AD).....". This is the only known interesting sculpture of Taṇḍu and it is extremely relevant to note its existence in the South. This shows that the Pallava period in the South gave greatest importance to Nāṭya Śāstra. It is no wonder that the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchipuram belonging to the later Pallava period has its inspiration only from Nāṭya-śāstra for depicting the Śiva Tāṇḍavam.

Taṇḍu is seen a muni playing the percussion for Śiva in many sculptures and icons of India. It is one of my arguments to prove that Nandikeśwara is not the same as Taṇḍu. They have a different identity as seen in the Nāṭya Śāstra.

3. WORSHIP

The Nāṭya Śāstras has enormous details of the Vēdic character, for the consecration of the Ranga. Viśwakarma, the divine architect was asked by Brahma to design the theatre. The responsibility of protecting the various parts of the building were assigned to the respective deities as follows :

Candra	- to protect the main building
Lōkapālās	- sides
Marut	- four corners

Varuṇa	-	space
Mitra	-	green room
Agni	-	stage
Divaukāśa (cloud)	-	all the percussion
Four Varṇa Dēvatas	-	pillars
Bhūtās	-	railings (of the seats)
Apsarās	-	rooms
Yakshinīs	-	entire house
Mahōdadhi	-	ground
Kāla	-	door
Ananta and Vāsuki	-	two sides of the door (the two Nāga kings)
Ādityās and Rudrās	-	space between pillars.
Yama	-	door frame
Śula	-	top of the door
Niyati and Mṛtya	-	two door keepers
Indra	-	sides of the stage
Vidhyut	-	Mattavāriṇi (side space of the stage)
Būtās, Yakshās and Piśācās	-	pillars
Guhyakās and Pannagās	-	bottom of the stage

Pūrvaranga is the elaborate ritual to be performed before the play. It has been an important element in all the Hindu theatres

at varied levels. It involved invoking the blessings of respective presiding deities of the directions and various parts of the state-cum-auditorium called Ranga. It was highly ritualistic and the Nāṭya Śāstra gives rules of an elaborate Vēdic Yagña for the purpose.

The mythology connected with the Pūrvaranga is interesting. The first play that was presented by Bharata and his sons was Amṛta Mathana - churning of the ocean. Seeing their own defeat being enacted, the Dānavās (demons) were aroused; they created vighnās (hindrances) through their magical power causing loss of memory etc., Indra realised the danger and flung his Jarjara (banner-staff) and warded off the evil. This jarjara was presented to the actors as Raksha or protection. The Sūtradhāra (director) of the various Hindu theatre still holds atleast a stick in the prologue. It was decided that Viśwakaram, the divine architect, should design a theatre which could eliminate vighnās. There are elaborate rules laid down for the construction of the Ranga which may be compared with those for building of temples, that Āgamās speak of, in relation to the rituals and astronomical connections. The consecration of the stage is yet another elaborate yagña in which various deities are invoked in different parts of the building. A Maṇḍala is drawn and specific deities are installed and invoked in the respective directions. The stage had to be east facing. The

diagram at the end of this chapter will give an idea of the godliness that the Hindu stage had enjoyed.

It will be an interesting study to compare the recently living tradition of Dhvajārōhaṇa (flag hoisting) followed by the Navasandhi worship in the temples, celebrated during annual festivals. Till the Dēvadāsi system prevailed half a century ago, the Navasandhi Kautvama were danced by them in the respective direction to invoke the guardian deities for protection from hindrances.

The Jarjara was posted with Vajra-thunderbolt- to destroy forces. In its Parva (sections) were installed Brahma, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Kṛtikēya and the Nāgās such as Sēsha and Vāsuki. Since Brahma himself occupied the middle of the stage, flowers were scattered in the centre and then all around, Pūja was offered to the jarjara also, as part of the Pūrvaranga. It is this ritual that was later simplified as Pushpāñjali in several Hindu Nāṭya and Nṛtta.

With the surroundings being represented by all the cosmic forces, the Hindu theatre became a mini cosmos indeed. The actors and actresses were also duly protected. The hero was to be protected by Indra, the heroine by Saraswati, Vidūshaka (comedian) by *Omkāra* and the rest of the characters by Śiva.

With such a godly view of the theatre and performance, there was no need for the Nāṭya Śāstra to speak separately of

dance in temples. The theatre itself was considered as the abode of all the Gods: hence the place of performance was consecrated as a place of worship, even if it was a temporary structure. The culture that emanated from Sanātana Dhārmic principles is totally religious, and there is nothing secular about it. The Nṛtta (dance), also has a prominent place in the Pūrvaranga and it is said to bestow the same fruit as that of a yagñā. Śiva himself declares to Bharata that if the Karaṇās and Angahārās are danced in Pūrvaranga, the Śuddha or ritualistic Pūrvaranga gets concerted into Citrapūrvaranga, adding visual appeal and variety. It is said to please the gods. The efficacy of Nṛtta was well recognised by Abhinavagupta who wrote the commentary for Nāṭyaśāstra in early 11th century in Kashmir. He sings thus:

यत्किञ्चिल्लास्यमेतेन देवी तुष्यति नित्यशः ।

यत्किञ्चित्ताण्डवं तेन सोमः सानुचरः शिवः ॥

Yatkiñcillāsyamētēna dēvi tushyati nityaśah

Yatkiñcittāṇḍavam tēna sōmah sānucarah śivah

Abhinavabharati - Chapter - IV

It means that even a little lāsyā satisfies Dēvi and a small performance of Tāṇḍava gladdens Śiva with his attendants. Nṛtta is auspicious and it is suitable for any such occasions. Worship is naturally the most auspicious act and surrendering the beauty of Nṛtta has the efficacy eulogised in later Āgamās which

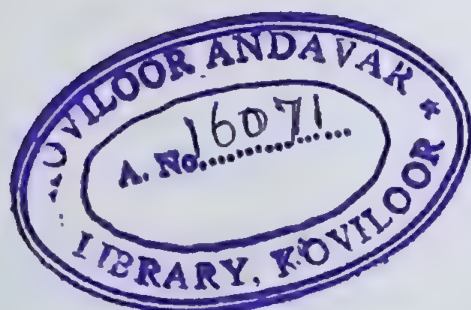
take clues from the Nāṭya Śāstra. The Āgāmās introduced Nṛtta as part of the temple rituals. The singing of songs in praise of the Lords and sounding the musical instruments go side by side with the performance of Nṛtta. The Śuddha Nṛtta performed to Nirgitā, that is syllables which have rhythmic significance without conveying any meaning, have come down to this day from the time of Nāṭya Śāstra. These Nirgitās are said to satisfy even the Daityās; they are also played on the instruments. It is this concept of invoking the Gods and sanctifying the place for performance which is a living tradition to this day in every strata of classical and folk theatre, of not only Hindu, but Buddhist, Jain and other religions which are influenced by the Nāṭya Śāstra. Even today in Indonesia, Balinese Rāmayaṇā is performed only after offering cooked rice to the deity. Traditional Rāmayaṇā theatre of Bali has even the custom of sacrificing a bird as Bali (offering) during its Pūrvaranga. I saw this rare performance in Denpasar, when it was specially organised in connection with the International Rāmayaṇa Conference in 1992

The dance and theatre of India has now some kind of a worship performed at the outset. The tradition varies from region to region and form to form. It must also be mentioned here, that it has been a custom in the last few decades to place an idol of Naṭarāja on the left anterior corner of the artiste on the stage. The Bharatanāṭyam concert used to start with Alārippu-

an item inherited from the Royal court performances. It was in 1962, that for the first time I performed the Pushpāñjali (now referred to by many as Tōḍayam), as part of a lecture demonstration on the Nṛtya Sampradāya of Kapāliśwara temple, Madras; I had specially learnt the entire repertoire of the Dēvadāsi tradition connected with this temple from my Guru Smt. Gowri Ammal, the last Dēvadāsī of this temple. After this, the Pushpāñjali tradition got revitalised. The idol on the side was made use of for offering the flowers. But unfortunately, the President of the function and others including the parents of the artists- particularly in Arangētrams - are seen loitering near the idol with their foot wear on. How could one identify this as an inherited value from the Pūrvaranga of Nāṭya Śāstra ?

MANDALA FOR RANGADEVATA PUJA

	WEST	WEST	WEST	WEST	WEST	WEST	
S							N
O							O
U	Nair̥ti		Samudra		Saptavāyu		R
T	Rākshasās		Varuṇa		Garuḍa &		T
H	Bhūtās				Other birds		H
	Yama, Mitra				Dhanada		
S	and his followers-		BRAHMA		(Kubēra),		N
O	Pitras, Piśācās,				Nāṭya Mātr̥kās		O
U	Uragās and				Yakshās and		R
T	Guhyakās				their Guhyakās		T
H	Vahni with		Bhagavān (Śiva)		Ganapatis		H
	Viśvēdēvās,		and his Bhūtās,		like Nandi		
S	Gandharvās,		Nārāyaṇa, Mahēndra,		Brahmar̥shis,		N
O	Rudra, Rshis		Skanda, Arka, Aśvina,		and Bhūtās		O
U			Śaśi Saraswati,				R
T			Lakshmi, Śraddha				T
H			Mēdha				H
	EAST	EAST	EAST	EAST	EAST	EAST	



CHAPTER - VI

NATYA SASTRA IN VARIEGATED SPECTRUMS

This chapter is an attempt to epitomise the study of the multifarious fields of speciality in arts, which have been developed through the spectrums of rays emanating from the Nāṭyaśāstra.

MUSIC

Chapters 28 & 34 of Nāṭyaśāstra are devoted to delineate the theoretical principles of music.,

- | | | |
|------------|---|--|
| Chapter 28 | - | explains "Jāti" (a concept almost equivalent to Rāga) |
| Chapter 29 | - | deals with Tata (string instruments) |
| Chapter 30 | - | Suśira (wind instruments) |
| Chapter 31 | - | Tāla (rhythm) |
| Chapter 32 | - | Dhruvagāna (musical forms) |
| Chapter 33 | - | Guṇa & Dōsha (good and bad qualities) |
| Chapter 34 | - | Pushkara (a kind of drum) |

Apart from these chapters dealing directly with music, there are several other chapters which have their contents relevant to

the subject and hence can be described as indirect inter-links with the art of music. This also proves the interdependence of the knowledge of all the chapters in order to master any one of the topics. For example, chapters 14 and 15 which deal with Candās (poetic) metres have direct links with chapter 32 which delineates Dhruvas i.e., songs. Chapter 17 which refers to Pāṭhya Guṇās or the qualities of reciting the text has elements like Kāku which govern intonation (Dhwani). The Pāṭhya Guṇās themselves include the seven swaras for rendering the dialogues. Hence this chapter which is more for Vācikābhinaya has ornaments of musical notes - Kāku - which is the mother of the present day Gamaka. The same Chapter 17 has connection with the chapter on Rasa for it gives the mode of recitation of the text suitable for the respective Rasās by the choice of Swaras. It is in the following order:-

Madhyama & Pañcama	-	for Hāsya and Srngāra
Sadja or Rsahabha	-	for Vira, Raudra and Adbhuta
Gāndhāra & Nishāda	-	for Karuna, and
Daivata	-	for Bibhatsa and Bhayānaka

Moreover to summon someone from a greater distance, a Tāra Sthāyi Swara or higher octave note is used. Madhya or middle octave note is for less distance and Mandara or lower octave note is for closeness. Hence we see how music is merged in speech itself.

Coming to actual music, Bharata used two terms Gandharva and Gāna. In short, they are to be used for Adrshṭa Phala and Drshṭa Phala ie., the intangible and tangible efficacy respectively. Gandharva is Mōksha - sādhana ie., a means for salvation for the soul, whereas Gāna is pleasing for the senses. Gāna is used for Nāṭya to enhance Rasōtpatti. For example, the Dhruva Gāna or the songs in Drama have a specific purpose of expression.

Many of the topics dealt under the chapters on music are relevant to this day. Though there are changes in the nomenclature, the concepts are still very much prevalent in India and even countries far away from us. The Saptaswara - the universal seven musical notes, the 22 srutis or microtones, the two scales Sadja Grāma and Madhyama Grāma, the 14 Mūrcanās or the scales based on model shift of tonic, the 18 Jātis from the two grāmās and 84 varieties of other scales which are either Auḍava (with 5 notes) or Shāḍava (with 6 notes), the musical forms, tālās and the orchestral groups with details of the classification and technique of playing them are all given an encyclopaedic treatment.

Bharata speaks of the performers of Nāṭya as three groups (Kutapa). The first is Nāṭya Kutapa ie., actors, secondly the Tata Kutapa ie., the groups of string instrumentalists and lastly the Avanaddha Kutapa comprising the percussionists. In the 28th chapter, he says that they must be like the crossed blades of

torches, when circled like a fan. He uses the term *Alāta Cakra* denoting total synchronization. Male and female singers are called *gāyaka* and *gāyani* respectively.

Songs are used in the play proper through *Dhruva* compositions. They are termed differently and modelled with specific purpose like entry of characters, descriptions, deliberations etc., The *Dhruvās* of *Nāṭyaśāstra* gave way to the present day *Dhrupad* tradition of North India and the *Daru* of South India. Apart from actual play, the various types of *Pūrvarangās* involved the *gitas* or songs. These are also classified. The *Gitas* had *Pada* (words) which were either *Sārthaka* - with meaning or *Nirārthaka* - devoid of meaning; the latter was called *nirgita*, which were made up of *Sushkāksharās* ie., rhythmic syllables. *Sushka* means dry ie., bereft of meaning and hence not juicy. This shows the continuity of a very old tradition of using *nirgita* in our dance, music and theatrical performances in every part of India to this day. The *Nirgitās* are said to please even the evil spirits and keep them away from hindering. The *Bahirgitās* seem to be of sacred nature. Apart from these, the *Lāsyāngās* are another set of songs, sung and danced or just used or *Abhinaya* performed while sitting and singing. These are *Sukumāra* and *Srngāra* based. The present day *Srngāra*-based dance compositions of Indian dance have their origin in these *Lāsyāngās*.

The *Mārgi Tālās* of *Bharatas*'s days are not often in use today,

though they are mentioned in the compositions of medieval and post-medieval periods too. Some of these are referred to in the Navasandhi Kautwams in Tamizh. The Tiruppugazh hymns of Tamizhnādu and the Tālās of Manipūri have a link through the Mārgi Tālās. The Tāla of Bharata's days seems to mean more of the entire duration of a section and not based on Āvarta (cycles) system. However the terms and concepts of Guru, Laghu and Pluta and even jātis like Tryaśra, Caturaśra etc., are all still remaining unchanged from Bharata's days in many parts of India. As far as the Chandas are concerned, Bharata says that there are lakhs of them and in fact explains and names some of them. It would do well to make a comparative study of these Chandas with the Śāndams that are met with in the Tamil classic Tiruppugazh.

NĀṬYA ŚĀSTRA IN WESTERN MUSIC

While we have seen the continuity of the musical concepts of Nāṭya Śāstra with India, the most striking oneness is seen in the concept of Grama - and Mūrcana with the basic scales and modal shift of tonic in the western classical music. As a student of western music (including a little of playing the piano), the first similarity of concept that struck me was that between the two Grāmās of Nāṭyaśāstra and the Major and Minor scales of western music. In concept, both are interval-based and not

Ādhāra Sadja-based as in present day Indian music. The comparison of Sadja Grāma and Madhyama Grāma with Major and Minor scales is only based on the concept and does not imply that they have the swaras of same tonal value.

To give a little more explanation to the lay reader, the western Major scale is the equivalent of the straight notes of the Śankarābharaṇam of Karnātak and Bilāval of Hindustāni music. The sa-ri-ga-ma-pa-da-ni of Indian music corresponds to the do-re-me-fa-so-la-ti of the Occident. On the key board instruments like piano or harmonium, the Major scale is taught first from the third key which is actually C. This is to facilitate the beginner to go on progressively playing on the white coloured keys on the board, without touching the interim black ones. Sounding this scale thus, we get the straight notes of Śankarābharaṇam. In Indian music, we have started referring to C as the first white in North or first "kattai" (literally meaning block) Śruti in South India. The Indian musicians started referring to the number of white and black keys as 1 or $1\frac{1}{2}$, 2 or $2\frac{1}{2}$ etc., while they chose the pitch for drone ie., Ādhāra Sadja. This was only after the advent of the harmonium in India. They refer to it as 5 kattai sruti. $1\frac{1}{2}$ kattai sruti etc., Here by Śruti, we mean the Ādhāra Sadja. While notating the major scale from C, the staff notation which is like a graph, shows the notes on the specified lines and space. The notation will totally change if the same major scale is played from

D (2 kattai). For Indians, the notation of sa-ri-ga-ma etc., will be constant, irrespective of whichever “kattai” is taken to be Sadjā. The Major scale will sound differently when the tonic or basic note is shifted. In other words. The intervals between notes will remain constant. The shifting of the tonic is called Mūrcana in Nāṭyaśāstra. Sadjā Grāma gives rise to scales like Sadji, Ārshadi Daivati etc., and the Madhyama Grāma Mūrcanās are scales like Gāndhāri Pancami etc., It is exciting to realise that for a few centuries, the western classical music has remained without any change in this basic pattern of two scale principle.

The Indonesian classical music is also interval-based and not Ādhāra Sadjabased. They also have just two scales - the “Pelog” (with seven tones) and “Slendro” (with five tones). One cannot but wonder if there could be a theory of mono origin of musical concepts in the history of humanity. Even for this study, one has to depend on the Nāṭyaśāstra for theoretical classification.

DRAMATIC FORMS

Due to combinations of Vṛttis in varying degrees, different forms of Nāṭya arise. Such a “Form” in Nāṭya is called “Rūpa” in Sanskrit. “Daśa Rūpas” or ten forms of Nāṭya have been discussed in great detail by Bharata. The first of these is “Nāṭaka”. It has the pride of containing all the “Vṛttis” and many “Rasās”, invariably concluding in wonder. Nāṭaka has to be based only on Epics and Puraṇās.

Some may think that “Nāṭaka” is exclusively a Tamizh term. We have the well known classification - Iyal, Íśai and Nāṭakam, meaning literature, music and drama respectively. Many such technical terms have been commonly and freely used in Samskrta, Tamizh and other languages absolutely without any inhibition. The entire Nāṭaka literature that we have in Samskrta and the term being used all over India cannot be over looked. Terms can be common, due to the inherent commonness of our culture. According to Nāṭya Śāstra, the foremost Rūpa or model of Nāṭya is termed as Nāṭaka. We have many examples in Samskrta and other languages of Nāṭaka literature.

“Prakaraṇa” is same as “Nāṭaka” in its format except that it has to be an imaginary story and not based on Epics and Puraṇās. The rest of the eight Rūpakāṣṭ Viz., Anka, Vyāyoga, Bhāna, Samavakāra, Vithi, Prahasana, Dima and Ihamrga are not to contain Kaiśiki Vṛtti. All these are classified, based on the Rasās they have to depict, number of Acts, number of actors involved, time taken for the enactment of the play and such other details. For example, the Dima should contain all Rasās except Śrngāra and Hāsyā. In contrast with this, Prahasana has Hāsyā as its main stay; it is satirical in nature. The Pallava Emperor Mahendravarman (7th c. AD) of Tamizhnadu is the author of the well known Samkrta play, “Mattavilāsa”, the Rūpa of which is “Prahasana”.

There is an interesting sculpture portraying the first scene of

this drama, at Dārāsūram temple (12th C.AD); this shows how a 7th century Samskrta play was still popular in the 12th century. A part of this play is still being performed by the Cākkiyārs of Kerala in the traditional Kūṭiyāṭṭam theatre. The story of Mattavilāsa can almost be described as Kānci by night; it is a socio- religious satire. The figure portrays a Kāpālīka and his concubine, so intoxicated that their legs get intertwined unintentionally in their crooked gait. She is seen reaching out to his beard for balance.

The evolution of the Daśa Rupās can be easily traced. The Vithi has just two characters. It has to be based on some discussion or debate. The Gollabhāma Kalāpam of Āndhra is a living example. The Bhāṇa was a one man show in the form of a description of subjective or objective experience. The Nonḍi Nāṭakam of Tamizhnādu was modelled after this. The Harikatha of South India and the Katha of Northern regions existing under various names have their origin in Bhāṇa. The present Kathak is believed to have originated from Katha. Later, Bhāṇa developed as an “Upa-Rūpaka” or Minor Rūpaka called Bhāṇikā, which was a one woman show. My performances - bilingual “Krishṇāya Tubhyam Namah”, the multilingual “Rāmāya Tubhyam Namah” and the Kamba Rāmāyanam” in Tamizh are close to Bhāṇikā in concept. My solo programme “Jaya Jaya Śankara” is to convey the Advaita philosophy and

Shanmatha concept of Ādi Śāṅkara; here, my concentration is on communicating concepts rather than characters; still it can be classified as a child of “Bhāṇika”.

It is relevant to trace the etymological derivation of the term “Bhāṇa”. To quote Sri. K.S. Srinivasan, who gives the comparative vocabulary of ancient literature in his “The Ethos of Indian literature”:-

<u>Meaning in English</u>	<u>Prākṛta</u>	<u>Tamizh</u>	<u>Sanskṛta</u>
to sing or recite	Bhaṇ	Paṇ	Bhaṇ
singer, poet	Bhāṇa	Pāṇan	Bhāṇaka
prose or poem	Bhaṇiya	Paṇṇatti	Bhaṇita

“Bhāṇa” as a one man show, described as one of the ten Rūpās in Nāṭya Śāstra is therefore very relevant on a pan Indian level. Does this all not reveal the deep connection that has been existing even in nomenclature in our vast sub-continent? Is it not swelling our common Indian psych to know that the age old text of Nāṭyaśāstra has such treasures of connections? One could revel on the link between the Tamizh Pāṇan and the Bhāṇaka. The Bhāṇa, which is one of the Major Rūpās must have the art practiced by the Pāṇars of ancient Tamizhnāḍu.

The present Bharatanāṭyam which was referred to as “Sadir” had another earlier format called “Nirupaṇam”, with one theme

linking a group of eighteen numbers., There are Nirupaṇams in Marathi language. The present repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam like Alāriṇṇu, Śabdam, Varṇam, Padam and Tillāna are all included in it. The “One subject concert” gave way to multi-subjected format which we have now. There two are called Ekārta and Prtagārta respectively. If a Nāṭya is performed as mono-acting, without changing the costume, it is called Eka Āhārya. None of the present forms need feel orphaned. They all have a mother in Nāṭyaśāstra. History of forms is a fascinating study.

ALANKĀRA SĀSTRA (POETICS):

Bharata says :-

वाचः परं नास्ति वाग्धि सर्वस्य कारणम् ।

“Vācaḥ param nāsti vāgghi sarvasya kāraṇam”

15.3 - Chaukamba edn - 1980

Here we find the concept of “word “ being supreme, and the creative power of the poet is recognized as Ātmaśakti. Nāṭyaśāstra is literally the mother of poetics, for, all the commentators on poetry have employed the terminology of Bharata to analyse and evaluate literature. Terms such as Ālambāṇa and Uddipāṇa Vibhāvās, Vyabhicāri Bhāva etc., which were analysed for the actor, are all followed even by Kāvyaālankāra authorities like Vemabhūpāla (in his commentary on Āmaruśatakam),

Mammata (Kāvyaprakāśa) and others.

Though in Bharata's time, love poetry had not emerged, K.S. Srinivasan points out the references to nail marks and teeth marks of lovers in Nāṭyaśāstra (Chapter XVI : 75-132 Chaukamba edn) and says that these occur in the erotic poems of Gītā Saptasati in Prākṛit. "In fact the reference to the amours of śiva in Nāṭyaśāstra (Rūpōpetam.....16....111) (and his shedding off the cobra-armlets) is an echo of Gītā Saptasati (1.69) or vice-versa, depending upon which could be deemed earlier". Of course the antiquity of Nāṭyaśāstra equalling that of Rāmāyaṇa would naturally take Gītā Saptasati to be posterior. Prākṛta has been a great link between Samskrta and Tamizh. In the first chapter of this present work, we have seen how Tamizh itself can be taken to be one of the Prākṛtās.

With regard to Tolkāppiyam, which also codifies the art of love, the level of romance is so high that according to K.S. Srinivasan, "there is no reference to the physicality of love in this Tamil grammar. Curiously, the work is viewed in the Tamil Tradition, as reflective of love-life in ancient Tamil country, rather than as a book of guidance for a poet dealing with love". We have already seen how the eight Rasās and their manifestation find parallels in the Meippāḍus of Tolkāppiyam.

In Marabiyal of Tolkāppiyam, the 32 Yuktis in the Tantrayukti

of Arthaśāstra are said to be cited. The Guṇās and Doshās are also similar. A comparative study of Nāṭyaśāstra and Agattiṇai Iyal and Meippāṭṭiyal could be very rewarding and may help in appreciating the nuances of Sangam poetry better. K.S. Srinivasan recognises at least six of the eight Nāyikās (heroines) in the poems of Kuruntogai, Aganānūru, Naṭṭiṇai and Kalittogai.

Theories on poetics, like in other fields of knowledge, had extensively percolated from region to region with poems as couriers, Daṇḍin, the celebrated poet from Gujṛat, was in the court of Simha Vishnu, the Pallava ruler at Kānci, where he wrote his “Kāvyadarśa”. This Alankāra work in Saṃskṛta was translated into Tamizh with the title “Daṇḍiyalankāram” around the 9th century. “Rasikapriya”, the 16th century work in Hīndi has culled information from the Nāṭyaśāstra and Kāmasūtra. The “Rasamanjari” of Bhānudatta of Mithila (12th century) seems to have been a guide book for Kshetragṇa to translate theories into songs (Padams) in Telugu for performance. These are still in vogue all over South India. It is amazing how in each field, the common roots are unveiled through the study of Nāṭyaśāstra.

NRTTA (DANCE) & YOGA:-

Do we understand our human structure really ? Do we realise its potential in the spheres of physical , intellectual, emotional and spiritual planes of existence? Is the human frame not a mini

cosmos into which all these energies are stored? After all, whether it is dance, yoga or martial arts, the first idea is to develop an awareness about oneself. Like the gradual progress in knowledge from kindergarten stage to the post-graduate level, the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels of existence within the same body system, are also awareness gained in progression of experience. The interrelationship between the four planes of existence is Yōga. The same aim governs the Sādhana of Nāṭya too. It is a universal force, which is harnessed by the individual to bring enlightenment and ability to be aware of oneself. The goal is common to both yoga and Nāṭya; only the path is slightly different. The first step in both is the control of the body. The discipline of the mind follows suit in both, and ultimately a combination of the control of body and mind is Yoga or Nāṭya Yoga.

Nṛtta is an art which depends basically on physical action in an aesthetically accepted manner, in accordance with laws of beauty inherited as a collective cognisance endowed by tradition and taste of the region. Indian aesthetics is governed by proportion and symmetry. Nāṭyaśāstra has categorized Nṛtta as dance which is part of physical expression in theatre. Āṅgikābhinaya is made up of Śākha (branch), Ankura (sprout) and Nṛtta (dance). Śākha implies the hand movements and gestures. Ankura is the imaginative use of these to create sentences through action. These together are responsible for Padārtha Abhinaya - word to word expression - and

Vākyārtha Abhinaya - expression of the meaning or mood of a sentence. The former is more in use in the Bharatanāṭyam and Kathakali tradition, whereas the later is the style of Kathak and more so, the Manipuri. We can see how concepts are scattered in different regions.

Nṛtta is the actual dance, making use of the whole body. The body is trained based on aesthetic and kinetic principles. The Major limbs are Angās and these include the head, chest, sides, waist, hands and feet. The Upāngās are minor limbs and these are those of the face and rest of the body. The pedagogic system of the Nāṭyaśāstra is so scientific that this should be revitalised for the systematisation of the teaching of Indian Dance as a whole. The Mārgi Vyāyāmās (exercises) prepares the body in a yogic methodology, and makes the physique flexible and ready to receive any of the Deśi styles. There is so much of commonality between the Āsanās of Yoga and the Anga-Upānga-Vyāyāmās of Nṛtta. This is the method which I have reconstructed for training in Dance which I term Bharata Nṛtyam at our institution Nrithyodaya.

Incidentally the question people often ask me is the reason for my having changed the name of my Dance from Bharatha Nāṭyam to Bharata Nṛtyam. The reasons are simple and straight.

1. "Nāṭya" implies the whole gamut of theatre, including Vācika

2. The term “Nṛtta” of Nāṭyaśāstra implies only Āṅikābhinaya and what I perform is much more.
3. The term Bharata Nāṭyam is a new nomenclature for what was known as Sadir. Nṛtya has come to mean Āṅika with Sātvika and Āhārya, as seen in the term Nṛtya Nāṭakās which emerged as Uparūpakās in the post-Bharata period. So I made bold to use the term Bharata Nṛtyam.
4. Moreover, my unintentional deviation from the norms of Sadir which had been established in the last two centuries was creating new trends. It was received exceedingly well by two extremes of groups namely, the Pandita (intellectual) and the Pāmara (commoner). Those who were acquainted only with Sadir norms thought that I was indulging in something sacrilegious. I did not want them to expect me to perform mere Sadir. Hence I changed the name.

The Nṛtta of Nāṭyaśāstra is made up to “Karaṇās” ie., units of dance. As early as 1962, I was ordained to be the first to understand them as movements, as against the notion of their being static poses. My using them in my dance was responsible in changing the style of my dance. The Karaṇās are made up of three elements, namely the Sthāna (posture) Nṛtta Hasta (movement of the arms) and Cāri (movement of the leg). There are 108 Karaṇās. My work has been to turn these theoretical concepts into practical performance. My

source materials for this study were literature, sculpture and inscriptions.

The Karaṇās are both pure dance movements and representational actions. They are to be meaningfully used in drama. Their performance has both Dṛṣṭa and Adṛṣṭa Phala (tangible and intangible fruits). As mentioned earlier, the performance of Karaṇās is also equated to a Yagñā. Hence they are included in the Pūrvaranga too.

The traces of Karaṇās are seen in all the regions of India and Asia. They are not mere acrobatic feats, though a few of such movements are also included among the 108. The present neo-classical dances of India have definite links with some Karaṇās, though there is no awareness about it. If critics find shades of dances of different regions in my dance, it is because of the genetic relationship that Nāṭyaśāstra has with all the regional forms. One must remember that the proper etiquette is to describe the daughter as resembling the mother and not the other way.

The psyche-physique relationship is so beautifully worked out in the Nṛtta of Bharata's days. The medieval authorities started using one more term "Nṛtya" to denote a combination of dance and drama. Nṛtta came to be defined as Bhāva Vihinam and Rasa Vihinam from about the time of the work on dramatic forms called "Daśa Rūpa" (ascribed to about 10th c.AD). This means that dance is devoid of feeling and aesthetic experience. This is far from the original concept of Nṛtta in Nāṭyaśāstra. The famous verse,

यतो हस्तस्ततो दृष्टिर्यतो दृष्टिस्ततो मनः ।
यतो मनस्ततो भावो यतो भावस्ततो रसः ॥

“Yato hastastato drshṭiryato drshṭistato manah
Yato manastato bhāvo yato bhāvastato rasaḥ”

means - where the hand goes there goes the eyes, where the eyes go there goes the mind, where the mind is involved, emotions arise and from the emotions, aesthetic experience is born. As cited earlier, even poet Kamban who is considered as equal to Kālidāsa for his metaphors, has taken these lines of Nāṭyaśāstra in his immortal Tamizh epic, Rāmāyaṇa; he writes:

கைவழி நயனம் செல்ல, கண்வழி மனமுந் செல்ல

“Kaivazhi nayanam śella, kaṇvazhi manamum śella”

Meaning the eyes move in the path of the hand, the mind follows the path of the eyes. Thus the mind is involved in Nṛtta, which implies that it is not devoid of feeling. The Nāṭyaśāstra verse can be interpreted in another way based on experience in practice of the art.

“From where the hand ends, the eyes take over, where the eyes’ perception ends, the mind takes over; thus Rasa is born”.

For example, one can move the hands up as Alapadama and cross it to mean the mountain; there is limitation for this height. The eyes can look beyond and establish a greater height. Still there is a physical

limitation, perhaps just up to the roof, beyond which one cannot see. But the mind can reach Mount Kailāsh itself and revel on the sight of the Lord. Is this not Nāṭya Yoga? Is Nṛtta not part of this process?

The Nāṭyaśāstra speaks of the actor as one who lets the spirit of the character enter into his body. Acting here becomes a personalised experience of an impersonal event. The personalised experience need to be expressed (Abhinaya) to attain Siddhi ie., the attainment of Rasa. Concretion of an abstract feeling is abhinaya. The actor receives the abstract Bhāvās of the character and converts them into concrete expressions. It is not just an Anukaraṇa, meaning a repetition, mere imitation or mimicry, but a poetic glorification of the character and the event; hence it is Anukirtana. For this, the training in Nṛtta and all the aspects of Abhinaya are necessary. But once the training and mastering are over, the body is to be forgotten about. It is no more mere body-consciousness, but an automatic synchronisation of music, movement and mood. The entire creation is represented on the stage, as though it is a mini cosmos. The actor himself is a miniature of the infinite, bearing in himself the potential of re-creating any aspect of the manifold manifestation of the supreme. What greater philosophy does one need than this kind of body training along with mental elevation, combined with aesthetic sublimation - all amalgamated in the Nāṭyaśāstra. Nṛtta is most elevating and its concept as Adṛṣṭa Phala an equation with Yagña

gave way later to the Āgamās including dance in the temples as part of worship.

NĀṬYAŚĀSTRA AND THE MARTIAL ARTS

The Nāṭyaśāstra speaks of specific combination of Cāris called Maṇḍalās to depict fighting sequences in Nāṭya. There are Nyāyās or rules for the release of weapons. Shades of Maṇḍalās are still seen in many of our dance drama traditions. Some of these are recorded in our TV film serial “Bhāratiya Nāṭya Śāstra”. In my production called “Daśa”, I have also reconstructed the Maṇḍalās and Choreographed them as fighting sequences involving two to ten dancers in progressive increase in the number of artists for the respective serial number of the Maṇḍalās; for example, the fourth Maṇḍala is performed by four artists and the tenth is choreographed for ten dancers.

Fifteen years ago, when I was the Convenor of the First Nāṭya kala Conference of Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras, co-sponsored by our Nrithyodaya, Madras and Bhulabhai Memorial Institute Bombay, I had invited Sri.Pandyan, an expert in martial arts to demonstrate movements of Silambam and Kaḷarippaiṭṭu. I gave the corresponding nomenclature of the movements from the Nāṭyaśāstra. It is significant to note that in both South Indian dance and South Indian martial arts, the unit of movement is called “Aḍavu”. The root of the word Aḍavu is Āṭana is Samskrta, meaning moving

around or Āṭṭam in Tamizh, meaning movement and Aḍugu in Telugu meaning step.

More recently I gave a lecture -demonstration jointly with Sri. Moses Tilak at Trivandrum for the Soorya Festival, on a comparative study of Nāṭya Śāstraic movements and Karāte- the martial art of Japan. It was based on the Shitoryu style of Karāte. It was a very rewarding experience to study this relationship. Fifteen disciples of mine and an equal number of his students took part. The Karāte movements were followed with the corresponding Cāris of Nāṭyaśāstra.

Bōdhi Dharma was a Buddhist monk from Kāncipuṛam, (Tamizhnāḍu, South India) who took Zen Buddhism to China in 540 A.D. He is called "Tomo" in the Chinese tradition. Incidentally the word "Zen" has sprung from the Samskrta term "Dhyāna", meaning meditation. It is said that Bōdhi Dharma's place in the art of Karāte is equal to that of Bharata in the performing arts. The history goes that he found the monks there in poor health and hence decided to teach them art of self defence through which one could improve one's inner and outer personality. The exercises that he codified are called "Shih pa lo han sho" ie., the eighteen hands of the Lo Han - the famous disciples of Buddha. This art which he taught to the monks, is the very basis of the Chinese Shaolin Kungfu. Though we can take pride in this acknowledged Indian origin of the martial arts in the East, it must be remembered that each region has been specialising in the respective styles.

One may wonder, what remotest connection could there be between Bharata's concept of Nṛtta and the martial arts, Is the human frame not the same, irrespective of the nationality? Are not the joints in the body modelled for certain types of actions in the human structure? The psychology of movements change due to three factors namely, (1) space occupied, (2) time taken and (3) force or energy released. All these physical actions are motivated through and for the psychological factor. Dance is for aesthetic enjoyment, whereas the martial arts are for defence and offence. But, for both these arts, the first and foremost need is the understanding of oneself. An awareness about how and why do we move and where do we get the energy from, and which vital part of the human mechanism is responsible for the force or motivation for either release or conservation of the inner power are all questions common to dance and martial arts. The eastern world has always been fortunate in pursuing the spiritual power dominant in man.

"Chi" for instance is a Chinese concept of the gentle style in martial arts, It is called "Ki" in Japanese. It means the internal energy, as opposed to the external energy of pure physical power. Amy Shapiro in his book "The Language of Martial Arts", says that "It is a universal force which, when harnessed by the individual, brings enlightenment, good health and ability to defend ourselves, "Chi" is learnt through relaxation and breathing technique". The concept of "Chi" seems to be similar to the Hindu concept of "Cit", meaning

consciousness or Awareness. Lord Śiva is said to be dancing in chidambaram (Cit + Ambaram), meaning the space of Consciousness. Practice of Yoga leads to an inner perception of that constant Cosmic Dance. Amy Shapiro's explanation of 'Chi' proves the link that Martial Art has with Nāṭya Yoga, in its very philosophy. Both the arts have drawn inspiration from the manifold manifestation of the Infinite Almighty.

In the 108 Karaṇās of Nāṭyaśāstra, there are movements which are Anukirtan (ie., poetic glorification) of the animals and birds. Some examples are the lion in "Simhavikṛiḍitam", the bull in "Vṛṣabhaḥkṛiḍitam", the elephant in "Gajakṛiḍitam", the peacock in "Mayūralalitam", the eagle in "Graddhrāvalinakam", the Garuḍa in "Garuḍaplutam" and the serpent in Nāgāpasarpitam", "sarpitam" and "Bhujangatrāsitam" etc., The animal style in fighting seems to be an important technique in many a region for the martial arts. For example, the Bōḍō, which is the Burmese weaponless art has twelve defence postures inspired by the boar, bull, cobra, deer, eagle, monkey, paddy bird, panther, python, scorpion, tiger and viper. Bersilat - a Malayan martial art has a regular dance ritual. Hence regular dance is seen as part of a fighting art. Just as both Durga and Kārtikeya are our deities of war and dance in India, the Chinese also have Kuan Ti as the god of war and peace. Karāte literally means empty handed, and also means Chinese hand. Karāte, though a Japanese art, has gained popularity all over the world and in India

particularly. The Samurai technique of Japan almost appears like dance.

The term “Waza” means technique and is equivalent to the contemporary term “Advau”. “Katha” is the “Korvai” ie., combination of Adavus. In Nāṭya Śāstraic parlance, they will be like the Karaṇa and its combination like Nṛtta Mātraka etc., The following list gives the names of stances in Karāte with their corresponding description based on Nāṭya Śāstra:-

1. 'Heiso Ku Dachi - Sama Jānu
- 2 Misibi Dachi - Sama for one leg and Tryaśra
for the other
3. Heko Dachi - Ekatāla space between
Samapādās
4. Shichi Hachi Dachi - Ekatāla space for Tryaśrapādās
5. Uchi Dachi - Ekatāla space with Tryaśrapādās
6. Nyfan Shin Dachi - Two tālās between sama with
slight Kuncita jānu
7. Shiko Dachi - Resembles Vaiśākha Sthāna with
four tāla space between
Tryaśrapādās and Ardha Kuncita
Jānu
8. Zen Kutsu Dachi - 4-1/2 tālās space with weight on
the right leg as in Āliḍa - Pratyāliḍa
Sthānās

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 9. Neko Ashi Dach | - (Cat stance) Aśwarkrānta Sthāna
with 1/2 tāla space between the legs |
| 10. Moto Dachi | - Āyata and Avahitta Sthānās |
| 11. Koso Dachi | - Swastika |
| 12. Shuri Ashi Dachi | - Beginning of Apakrāntacāri |

Apart from the above list of stances, Cāris like Syandita, Eḍakākriḍita, Apakrānta, Ākshipta, Vikshipta, Bhujangatrāsita, Udvṛtta and others were recognised in Karāte. Though I was under the impression that martial arts depend on force of action, I was told that it is the course of action and not the force that the science of fight recommends. Sri. Moses Tilak opined that the Cāris of Nāṭyaśāstra and the methodology of training the body found in it would be most useful for Karāte students.

Even in the Martial art, the spiritual force seems to be of great value. The term “Do” in Japanese means path, comparable to our “Mārga”. It is a correct form of the Chinese word “Tao” which is a complete philosophical system. “Ryu” refers to a school that emphasises specific technique or sub-systems. In our parlance, it can be compared to Mārgi and Deśi.

What is said in “Tai Chi Chuan”, a classic written by Chang San Feng is so close to the concept of Récaka in Nāṭyaśāstra. Feng says that “In every movement, the entire body should be light and agile and all part connected like a string of pearls”. This reminds us of the

concept of Angahāra - a garland of movement of the limbs. Another very important statement of Feng is - "The "Chi" should be stimulated and the Spirit of vitality should be retained internally". I have always felt that after dancing Bharata's movements in that technique for a couple of hours, there is no pain, no weariness, but on the contrary a wholesome sense of relaxation both physically and mentally. The 13 postures are explained by Wang Chung Yueh of the Ming dynasty thus - "When you push and pull, withdraw and attack, your "Chi" adheres to the back of your body and is gathered into the spine. Inwardly you strengthen your spirit of vitality, outwardly you appear peaceful and quiet". This takes us close to the "Kuṇḍalini Yoga" and "Chi" in spirit is the same as "Cit". In short, it summarises the "Chidānanda", obtained through channelising the physical and mental power in unison.

INSCRIPTIONS:

Bharata's popularity during the Pallava period is seen through an inscription of Rājasimha (700-730 AD) at Sāluvānkuppam in Mahābalipuram. This Samskrta inscription means "Who will be able to understand the music of Kālakāla if it were not Vidātri (Brahma), Bharata, Hari, Nārada or Skanda?" (Epigraphica Indica Vol XX pp 71 and 79). It is interesting to note that, next to Kālakāla-Śiva and Brahma, Bharata is mentioned even before Hari, Nārada and Skanda. It looks that this listing is in accordance with the chapter alignment of Nāṭyaśāstra. Brahma is the originator

of Nāṭya Vēda, as seen in chapter - 1; Śiva is the propounder of Nṛtta, as evidenced in chapter 4. Hari is attributed with the creation of Vṛttis in the chapter on Maṇḍalās and Nārada is connected with music. Skanda, though mentioned only as one of the deities installed in the Jarjara itself, gains more prominence in the inscription, because he is the Lord of the Tamizh country. Moreover he has an important role in later work on Nandikeśwara called “Bharatārṇava”. An inscription in Samskrta at Paṭṭaḍakkal in Karnāṭaka region (8th or 9th c), records how in South India, dancers instructed in Bharata’s work (Naṭa Seṣya Bharata Mathayuta) were able to vanquish rivals. (Indian Antiquity Vol X cited by P.V. Kane in History of Sanskrit Poetics)

The Karaṇa sculptures at the Śārṅgapāṇi Swami temple at Kumbakoṇam are Śiva figures with two hands. Many of them still retain the serial number according to Nāṭyaśāstra, and the names of the Karaṇās are inscribed in Tamizh Grantha characters belonging to 12th century. I have myself copied them and given them in the first volume of my doctoral thesis. The eastern and western gopurams of Chidambaram Naṭarāja temple have the inscriptions of the relevant couplets from Nāṭyaśāstra, defining the respective Karaṇās, inscribed in Tamizh Grantha above the figures. The inscriptions of the eastern gopuram are recorded in the Epigraphical report of 1914. All these are examples of the inscriptional evidence to the proclamation of Bharta’s authority

in matters relating to Dance and Sangita as a whole in various regions.

INDIAN CINEMA

I have shown with examples of film clippings in our Telefilm Serial, *Bhāratiya Nāṭya Śāstra*, how the Indian cinema is but a daughter of the traditional Indian theatre. Very recently, when the great and popular artist of stage and screen, Sivaji Ganesan won the International Chavelier Award instituted in France, I ventured on a video presentation of clippings from fifty of his films and explained how, without an awareness about *Nāṭya Śāstra*, he has exhibited an inherited tradition of acme of perfection in the art of communication, so much so, it is in total accordance with the principles of *Nāṭyaśāstra*. As explained earlier, a *Śāstra* is that which is universal and timeless in value; just as how arithmetics cannot change, the formula will not change. If our calculations are wrong, it is not the mistake of the science of arithmetics. The pillar cannot be blamed if the passer-by is blind. Hence, if there is beauty, it has to be *śāstraic*, even if one does not know the *Śāstra*.

The *Vṛttis* of *Nāṭyaśāstra* are explained as pertaining to the mode of activity of speech, thought and action of the body in the graceful and forceful styles. These are respectively called *Bhārati*, *Sātvati*, *Kaiśiki* and *Ārabhaṭi* *Vṛttis*. When a film is dialogue-oriented, with skillful rendering of the speech, written with literary value, the film reflects

a continuance of Bhārati Vṛtti. Many of the earlier films of Sivaji Ganesan, like Parāśakti and Manohara are Bhārati in Nature. Generally, the films from Bengal and particularly those of the world renowned Director, Sātyajit Ray, can be categorised as Satvati, for they are often charged with an emotional treatment, with less speech or even action. Most of the Hindi and other films which are not only based on love-theme, but are full of song and dance, can be classified as Kaiśiki Vṛtti. The thrilling combats and fights often met with the films of the matinee idol of the millions, M.G. Ramachandran can be described as the cinematic version of the concept of Ārabhaṭi Vṛtti.

If our films are musical, it is not surprising, for, without any doubt, the Indian Cinema had originally inherited the theatrical tradition. In fact, in the beginning of Indian film history, we find dramas having been picturised as films, with even the same cast in entirety. This has been true of all the early Indian films. However, today, with Institutes of Film Technology enjoying importance, it would do well to develop an intellectual and ethical attitude towards film making. The psychology of characters, the modes of acting, the art of emphasis and the possible positive and negative reactions of the spectators and the effect of cinema on the masses are all important aspects to be learnt by directors and actors. Some chapters of Nāṭyaśāstra like Vṛtti Bhāva, Rasa and Abhinaya, could surely enlighten a serious film maker.

ETHICS OF ENTERTAINMENT :

We have seen how the Nāṭyaśāstra is relevant for every branch of today's culture, including the Cinema. The purpose of Nāṭya was so wholesome that it would do well for those connected with framing the Cultural Policy of our country, to take cognisance of the ethics of an age old tradition in performing arts. In the first chapter, Bharata explains the characteristics of drama thus :- “ Drama is a representation of the three worlds..... it teaches duty to those who go against it, love to those who are eager for its fulfillment, chastises those who are ill-bred or unruly, promotes self restraint in those who are disciplined, gives courage to cowards, energy to the heroic, enlightens the dull-headed and gives wisdom to the learned There is no maxim, no learning, no art or craft, no device, no action that is not found in Drama”. In chapter-24, Bharata forbids the following actions on the stage:- If out of necessity, anyone sleeps alone or with anyone, no kiss or embrace or any private acts, such as biting scratching with nails, loosening the nivi, the pressing of breasts and lips should be presented on the stage..... As a Nāṭaka is to be witnessed by a father and son, the mother-in-law and the daughter in-law (sitting together), these acts should be carefully avoided”. In other words, drama was meant to entertain, educate and elevate.

Media persons have an ethical responsibility in shaping the minds of the audience and not sacrifice values of civilization for mere commercial gains, by exploiting weakness and ignorance. Unless

the Departments of Education, Culture and Information & Broadcasting jointly face the present situation of debased moral values, the ills of the society cannot be tackled. The projection of violence and sex in the large and small screens seem to be instructing and inspiring people for more and more crimes. Can we revitalise the ethics of mass communications through popularising the values of permanent nature ? It is interesting to recollect the mythological origin of Nāṭya; Brahma is said to have created this media in order to check the moral deterioration in the world.



CHAPTER - VII

NATYA SASTRA AND THE CURRENT DESIS

Almost every regional classical and semi-classical theatrical and dance forms of post-Independence India is nothing but a product of modernisation of the respective Deśi forms. The renaissance in the field of performing arts in Swatantra Bhārat has no doubt, re-established patronage, appreciation and respectability to the art and artistes. Many a phoenix has been born out of the ashes of the burnt forms in the recent decades. The Odissi, Satriya, Chau and Yakshagāna are some examples. The present Bharatanāṭyam was more fortunate to have an earlier exposure and recognition in pre-Independence India. The changing of the nomenclature from Sadir to Bharatanāṭyam has certainly achieved the objective of raising the social respectability of the art form; but it has also created confusion with regard to its antiquity and authenticity in relation to Bhāta's Nāṭyaśāstra, and has found the top place in the listing of Indian art forms.

In contrast with the artists of early this century, most of whom never crossed the boundaries of their districts, classical and folk artists are now widely travelling and performing in India and abroad too, thanks to the Inter-State Cultural Exchange Scheme, Zonal Festivals,

railway concessions to artists, bilateral cultural agreements with other countries and more recently, the Festivals of India abroad; thanks to the awards to the artists conferred by Academies and Governments, which have added to our cultural pride; thanks to our Republic Day celebrations at our capital when the tribal culture of remote corners of our country are duly exhibited, an extension of which was felt in the "Apna Utsav". When one ponders over this, the sum total of all these is still, just regional glorification, described as Unity in diversity, in the name of "creating" National Integration. Most unfortunately, it is seldom realised that there is a common root hidden deep in the bosom of our Motherland, which has caused all the colourfull and juicy flowers and fruits. We see the "Deśi" and their variety in the name of diversity. This revival will have no meaning, if the common root ie, the "Mārgi" is not recognized. If "Mārgi" is studied and revived, none of these modern Deśi forms will feel orphaned. Whether it is Kathak of the North Indian Kathākārs or the Kathakali of the South Indian Kéralites, the law and philosophy governing their contents are the same. The apparent diversity may be because of the fact that each region manages to remember and maintain just a few aspects of a common Nāṭya Vēda. If Kathak today is based mainly on the Sama Sthāna, Bharatanāṭyam is structured on Maṇḍala Sthāna with Sama and Dwibhangās; Odissi is based on Vaishṇava Sthāna with Tribhanga and Kathakali is based on Vaiśākha Sthāna or Aindramaṇḍala Sthāna. Almost every

traditional form like the Kūṭiyāṭṭam, Yskshagāna, Nautanki or Bhavāi from various parts of India still follow the Nāṭyaśāstra tradition with regard to Pūrvaranga. In the above mentioned forms, as well as in the Terukkūttu and Bhāgavata Méla, actors are still speaking, singing and dancing. Every regional dramatic and dance style are still retaining some aspects of the “Mārgi” in their present “Deśi” framework. Hence, every present classical form is nothing but the revived version of the respective Deśi structure.

In the process of my own research interacting with my own dance, the performer in me always insisted on a self-experiencing of the theories delineated in the Śāstra. When I reconstructed the 108 Karaṇās mentioned in the Nāṭyaśāstra, I used them in my own choreography and I was misunderstood as mixing styles, while I was only interpreting the style of Nāṭyaśāstra. This itself helped me to understand the genetic relationship that all the present Deśi styles have with Mārgi.

Fifteen years ago, when I convened the First All India Nāṭya Kala Conference at Madras, my concentration was to see the cross currents and links. This was very fruitful; many artistes from various regions presented papers and demonstrations.

It was in 1985 that I first thought of a Nāṭyaśāstra Śiksha Camp of Gurukula pattern. The camp was for fifteen days at Mahābalipuram, away from the maddening influences of the city life. It was meant

only for my disciples and their students. I felt the need to codify and channelise the pedagogic system for dance which I had been evolving for over fifteen years. I wanted to standardize the Mārgi training method and update the syllabus for the courses at our Nrithyodaya and our allied organisation in certain other parts of India., Fifty of my senior disciples, young teachers and choreographers, whom I had taught at different period of time, stayed together with me and took both theoretical and practical lessons based on Nāṭyaśāstra.

Since it was a new venture, the entire group first went to Kānchipuram and received the bountiful blessings of Pujoyasri Mahāswāmi of Kānchi Kāmākōti Peetham. Then, we proceeded to Tanjāvūr, Kumākōṇam and Chidambaram, where I conducted classes in theory and practice along with field work, explaining the sculptures. Sri. N. Sethuraman gave lectures on certain relevant inscriptions at the Chidambaram temple itself. After this, we reached Mahābalipuram, where we camped for a fortnight. There, I had invited a few guest lecturers for the course:-

Sri. Venu	- Kūṭiyāṭṭam tradition
Capt. Subbarayan	- Śāṅgam literature
Prof. A.S. Gnanasambandam	- Natarāja Tattva.
Sri. Ammanur Madhava	
Chakkiyar	- Nétrābhinaya & Hastās

Sri. Karaikudi Krishnamurthy	-	Tāla
Smt. Aruna	-	Cosmetics

The camp was an experimental one comprising of participants who were already familiar with me and my work. The purpose of achieving uniformity in methods of training in sister centres on Mārgi methods was achieved with the birth of fifty full-fledged teachers for Bharata's dance technique.

BHĀRATIYA NĀṬYA ŚĀSTRA SIKSHA CAMPS

Our Nrithyodaya now decided to conduct All India Nāṭya Śāstra Siksha Camps. Three such camps conducted in 1987, 1988 and 1989 have revealed beyond doubt many links. Each camp admitted 50 participants to learn the Nāṭyaśāstra-theory and practice. They were chosen from various dance disciplines like Bharatanāṭyam (including a few sub-styles), Manipuri, Kathakali, Odissi, Mōhiniyāṭṭam, and Oṭṭanthullal. Upcoming dancers and University lecturers also took advantage of this camp and got benefits. They were all conducted on Gurukula pattern in sylvan surroundings. Apart from my handling practicals, Prof. K.D. Tripathi gave lectures on Nāṭyaśāstra. Yōga and conversational Samskrta were part of the course. Each year, the camp ended with the staging of a Samskrta play, "Nāṭya Śāstra Avataraṇam" in which all the fifty participants acted. Apart from the three Camps on a national level, we also had one more on an international level at USA in 1988. Here are just a

few pearls from the Ocean we dived into:

THE FIRST CAMP -1987:-

1) In May, 1987 during the camp at Patanjaliपुरi (near Coimbatore), lectures and demonstrations on the Manipuri discipline were given by Rajkumar Singajith Singh and his wife Smt. Charu. Though at the outset, it was said that the Manipur valley has been totally isolated from the mainland and has had an independent cultural tradition, many basic links got unfolded unintentionally. To mention just a few points (not taking into account the connections through religion and philosophy), we could see direct links of the traditions of Tamizhnādu with that of Manipur.

(a) It came as a pleasant surprise when we realised that the term "Isai" means "Music" not only in Tamizh but in Manipuri also.

(b) Secondly, the Manipuri Tālās sounded like the old Tiruppugazh Tālās on which some serious research is going on in Tamizhnādu. This is another proof for a common "Mārgi" tradition in music. It is noteworthy to remind ourselves of the historic fact that Saint Arunagirinātar, the author of the immortal Tiruppugazh in Tamizh, was a Gauda Brahmin (ie., of Bengālī origin), whose family had migrated and settled down in Tamizhnādu. It is therefore significant that Ōdramāḡadhi and Dākshinātya were united by a common adherence to Mārgi system. It may be fruitful to take up a comparative study of the obsolete Tiruppugazh Tālās and to recon-

struct them with the help of a living tradition in Manipur. The treatise known as *Gōvinda Lilā Vilāsm* on Manipuri dance clearly states its allegiance to Bharata.

(c) Thirdly, even the way in which they handled the "Kar Tāl" (cymbals) has a parallel in the *Ōduvāri*'s tradition while singing the "Thévārams" (Tamizh hymns) All these three connections need more serious study.

(d) Fourthly, the Manipuri script seems to have similarities with the Obsolete Tamizh Grantha Script.

(e) Fifthly, the nomenclature for the main Sthāna or stance in Manipuri was mentioned as "Sagon Phirep": meaning "Horse Stance" It is exactly same as the "Aśwagrānta Sthāna", meaning the same, as described in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. This posture is commonly seen in the sculptures of Tamizhnādu.

THE SECOND CAMP - 1988

The camp in May, 1988 at Vidyānagar (near Bangalore) granted many more gratifying revelations. I had undertaken an in-depth study of the influence and adherence to *Nāṭyaśāstra* in different regions. The lectures and demonstrations followed by a comparison with the precepts found in *Nāṭyaśāstra*, was more than fruitful in proving the relationship between the common parent "Mārgi" with all the living *Dēsi* traditions, which are a result of transformation from generation to generation by sheer rote. A comprehensive view of the

under current of Nāṭyaśāstra even in the present living traditions was perceived through the following lectures and demonstrations. The technical details are beyond the purview of this little book. Prof. K.D. Tripathi and I shared the responsibility of giving a bird's eye-view of the theoretical and practical aspects of Nāṭyaśāstra respectively, during the course of the fortnight. Other lectures were centered around the influence of and adherence to Nāṭyaśāstra in the respective regions.

Dr. R. Nagaswamy	-	Tamizhnādu
Sri. P.S. Appa Rao & Dr. Arudra	-	Āndhra
Sri. Unnikrishnan	-	Kērala
Smt. Kum Kum Mohanty	-	Orissa
Smt. Malya Rao & her disciples	-	Karnāṭaka with regard to Yaskshagāna, & North In dia with regard to Kathak.

The demonstrations included those of :-

Sri Govindan Kutty	-	Kathakali
Smt. Thaṭigāmani Kutty	-	Mōhini Āṭṭam
Sri Muriyad Muraleedharan	-	Ōṭṭanthullal
Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra	-	Odissi
Sri Kalakrishna	-	Navajanārdanam
Sri Natarāj Ramakrishna's disciples	-	Péranī Śiva Tāndavam
Sri Tuluva Kūṭṭa group	-	Yakshagāna

Sri. T.S. Parthaśarathy traced the influence of Nāṭyaśāstra on present day Indian Music as a whole. It was a rare occasion when all eyes were set on common points and not the differences as usual. The continuity of Nāṭya Śāstra tradition in all regions became too obvious even for young students who enthusiastically started discussing the distinct overlappings. Once they got accustomed to the Mārgi foundation, they were able to recognise the link between the respective Deśis as well as their connection with the Mārgi.

THE THIRD CAMP - 1989

The third All- India camp was conducted in May 1989 at Mahābalipuram. The participants from all over India were accomplished dancers, choreographers and lecturers. About ten of them attended the camp for a second time. The guest lectures and demonstration included.

Prof: Ramanujam	-	Tamil Drama
Guru Kittappa Pillai	-	Rare compositions & Aḍvaus in Sadir
Guru Bipin singh and Smt. Darshana Javeri	-	Manipuri technique
Sri Kannappa Tambiran	-	Terūkkuttu
Dr. Pramila Gurumurthy	-	Hairkatha
Dr. S.S. Janaki	-	Some aspects of Nāṭyaśāstra
Sri.Ganapathi Sthapati	-	Ancient Theatre Architecture
Dr. Nagaswamy	-	Nāṭyaśāstra and Sculptures

- Sri. Appukkuttan Nair - Kūṭiyattam-Lecture-Demonstration by Mārgi group, Trivandrum
- Kum. Uma Maheswari - Harikatha Demonstration in Samskrta

Guru Vempati chinna

Satyam - Kuchipudi -lecture Demonstration

THE CAMP ABROAD (USA)

In 1988, Nrithyodaya conducted a camp for teaching Nāṭyaśāstra at Ārsha Vidya Gurukulam of H.H. Swami Dayananda Saraswati at Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania. The 50 Participants included students of reputed Indian dancers in USA also other ethnic groups and modern dancers. I had to shoulder double responsibility of giving the lectures as well as conducting the practical classes. Swamiji gave lecture on Indian philosophy and the significance of aesthetics. This camp proved the validity of the Nāṭyaśāstric approach to body training and the psychology of physical movement as a universal phenomena for humanity at large.

THE UNDER - CURRENT OF MĀRGI IN TODAY'S DESIS

The structure of Nāṭya as a theatre art, with its traditional Pūrvaranga (preliminaries) followed by the artists speaking, singing with their own voice and dancing to express ideas and create Rasās is the common feature of every regional theatrical presentation in both strata, namely classical and folk. With regard to the actual dance technique, various regions have retained different aspects of

Nāṭyaśāstra. Among the basic stances, the Nāṭyaśāstra described those on which the movements are to be built. The present neo-classical styles which are the children of the respective Deśis, are based on the following Mārgi Principles.

Bharatanāṭyam

(Originally called Sadir) - Maṇḍala Sthāna with pārśva Pādam

Kathakali & Mōhiniyāṭṭam - Maṇḍala, Vaiśāka & Aindramaṇḍala Sthānās in Pārśni or Vaḍimbu Pādaṁ

Kūchipudi - Maṇḍala Sthāna with tryāśra Pādam

Odissi - Maṇḍala, Vaishṇava and Aindramaṇḍala sthānās

Satriya - Maṇḍala Sthāna

Manipuri - Sama sthāna with Ardha Kuncita Jānu

Kakthak - Sama Sthāna

with regard to hand gestures, all the communicative gestures mentioned in the Nāṭyaśāstra still survive in the Southern region including Orissa. In Kērala, though the artistes are following a more recent work "Hasta lakshaṇa Deepikā" in which most of the names do not correspond to the forms of the gestures, "Bālārāma Bharatham" - another authentic work follows Bharata faithfully. Most of the Nṛtta

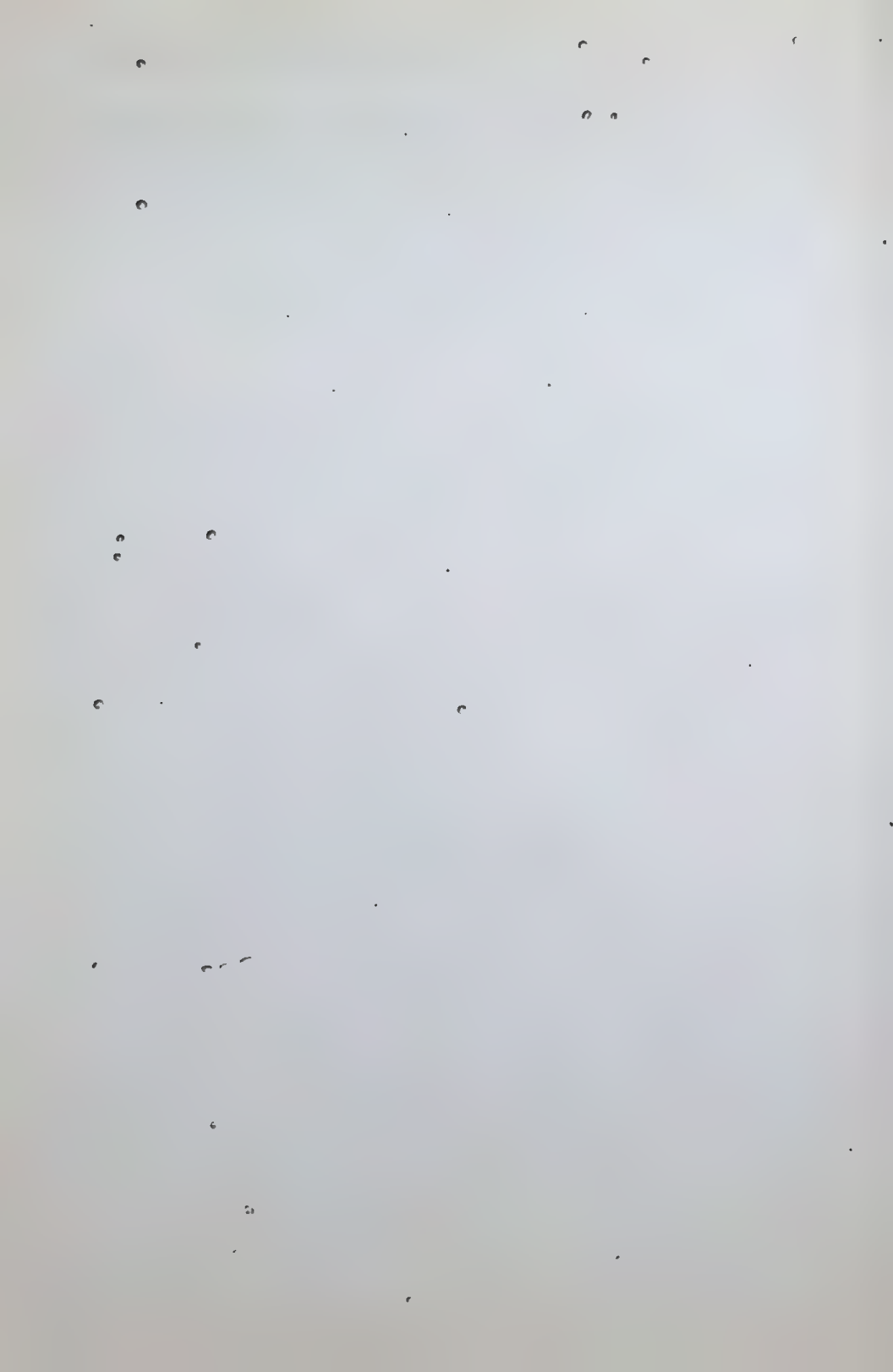
Hastās mentioned in the Nāṭyaśāstra for non-rēpresentational dance are still in use in the Manipuri tradition, though their names are not in vogue. The present Odissi has been evolved only in the last four decades. Systematization is still in progress. Many Cāris and Karaṇās of Nāṭyaśāstra can be recognized in this style which is ancient and yet new. Authentic Yakshagāna of South Cānara closely resembles, "Krishṇaṭṭam" of Kērala which is the ancestor of Kathakali. The reconstructed "Pēraṇi" from Āndhra has the semblance of Kathak in its gyrations and breath - taking speed in foot work. A less known semi-classical dance form, Śiva Tāndava, reconstructed from Āndhra, is said to have been in vogue about half a century ago, in and around Alahābād. This information was given by Prof. K.D. Tripathi who had seen this dance when he was a little boy.

Smt. Maya Rao traced the deliberate changes which the "Kathākārs" of Brindāvan had to make in their hand gestures, when their art evolved as "Kathak" in the Moghul court. Hastās depicting Krishṇa and Rādha in Rās and Kathā has to be modified to please the Muslim patrons. The Bṛamaris of Nāṭyaśāstra and post-Nāṭyaśāstra work can be recognized in the cakkars of Kathak. The Ōṭṭanthullal of Kērala is a semi-classical descendent of the "Bhāṇa" of Nāṭyaśāstra- a one-man show in which story telling, mono-acting and dancing are combined.

Camp after camp, an awareness about the strong link that has existed

between all the Dēśis and the Mārgi was getting enlarged and percolated. The Tele-Film Serial, "Bhāratiya Nāṭya Śāstra", produced by Nrithyodaya, was thus a product of all the experiences gained from the exposure to the fundamental harmony of Indian culture, which has existed through the Nāṭyaśāstra.





CHAPTER-VIII

THE PHENOMENAL TRANCE - TIME AND SPACE

As a record of history, here is my earnest attempt to epitomise as explicitly as possible, an experience of transcending time and space, through my adherence to Nāṭya Śāstra. It is the fruit of the sheer merciful grace of His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swāmigal (AD 1894-1994), the 68th Śankarāchārya of the illustrious Kānchi Kāmakōṭi Peetham. This centenarian Sage of this century was Divinity of human frame, a colossus, a personification of Omniscience with a melting heart of the Universal Mother. What a boon it is, to revel, in remembering him by recollecting anecdotes in my life in which he had figured as the light of parental love, wisdom and truth. Though beyond comprehension, he condescended to my mundane level, to fulfill the righteous desires of my soul. He was not a mere recluse, but known for his unbelievable spectrum of knowledge, be it philosophy or paleography, phonetics or atomic physics, linguistics, archaeology, music, theatre and poetics; In short, he was a walking encyclopaedia or a computer, with unlimited cognisance in human form.

I have had the unique blessing of getting his Divine guidance directly

on not only matters relating to Nāṭya Śāstra, but Indological studies as a whole, on several occasions. Though the details are beyond the purview of this work, it is imperative on my part to share with the reader, a deeply personal experience of existence as a link beyond time and space, through the medium of Nāṭya Śāstra.

It was in 1980, when I received “Padmaśrī” - the Presidential Award at New Delhi - that I made a bee line to Satāra (in Mahārāshṭra) with my family to reverentially place the honour at the Holy feet of Pūjyaśrī Paramāchārya. He was camping there when he was traversing Bharat on foot at that ripe age of 87. It was just at that time, a new temple for Śiva-Naṭarāja was being contemplated to be built there at the behest of His Holiness. The basic motivation and monetary offering came from a devotee, Sri Shāmaṇṇa. The State Governments of Mahārāshṭra, Āndhra Pradesh, Karnāṭaka and Tamizhnāḍu officially met the cost of construction of the Gopurams in the four cardinal directions. The Government of Kērala contributed the necessary wood for the central shrine.

The Āchārya showed his most benevolent blessing, by commanding me to design a new set of 108 Karaṇa sculptures for this Uttara Chidambaram Natarāja Mandir. What an honour ! An unparalleled Award of Divine boon indeed! The very purpose of my birth, seemed to have been fulfilled. Apart from my humble efforts in collecting about a couple of lakhs through my concerts and donations, the Central Government gave a grant of Rupees One Lakh for

this Karaṇa Sculptures Project.

Sri. Muthiah Sthapati, the well known temple architect and sculptor, was commissioned by His Holiness, for carving the sculptural panels. His Holiness himself decided that they are to be carved in black granite, and that too, brought from the village Paṭṭimalaikkuppam in Tamizhnāḍu. The temple built in Mahārāshṭra was to be built in Draviḍian style, for, Mahārāshṭra is always included in the traditional geography of Panca Draviḍās. Moreover, His Holiness said that since Mahārāshṭra is the meeting point of North and South, the ancient Mārgi dance technique which was common to the whole country, was to be reinstalled there in this century.

“Which is the cultural series that is to be followed at Satara?” - was my query to the Mahāswāmi. I showed samples of photographs from three temples- (1) Śiva with four arms as at Tanjāvūr, (2) Śiva with two arms as at Kumbakōṇam and (3) Pārvati with two arms as at Chidambaram. I was prepared to hand over to the sculptor any of these photographs of the Karaṇa sculpture in the above mentioned temples. These three temples had formed a major primary source of my Doctoral thesis “Karaṇās in Indian Dance and Sculpture”

The Āchārya's decision made me dumb-founded. None of those photographs were needed. I was to design a fresh set of figures and not simply copy the existing ones. The diagrams had to be based on my reconstruction of the Karaṇās and I was expected to try and freeze those interim stages of the movements, which are not already

recorded elsewhere. Each panel has to have the twiñ figures of Śiva and Pārvati. The relevant quotation of the couplets from Nāṭya śāstra were to be inscribed in Nāgari script under each panel. These were to be installed at an eye level in the outer circumambulatory of the Natarāja shrine, for the convenience of viewing them. The religious efficacy will be that one circumambulation round the shrine containing 108 panels of our universal parents would give the fruit of performing 108 Pradakshinas.

A new project erecting a Natarāja temple with Karaṇa sculptures! After a lapse of several centuries ! To crown it all, I was to make new design based on my reconstruction from Nāṭya Śāstra !! What a responsibility towards posterity ! I gasped in a confluence of emotions. But soon I gained confidence, with a realization of the fact that I am after all an instrument in the Holy hands of the Avatara Purusha.

It took more than a year for me to prepare the designs. The first step was to decide the exact moment of the movements to be frozen. I myself made rough sketches for the 108 Karaṇās. Keeping these for ready reference, I modelled for the line drawings to be made by Prof. Thirugnanam of the college of Temple Architecture and Sculpture, Mahābalipuram. He took several days to turn each of his rough sketches into proper drawings, based on the proportions like Tālamāṇa and Pramāṇa as per Śilpa Śāstra. The authentic hair-do for Śiva and Pārvati (like the Karaṇḍa Makuṭam etc.,) had to be carefully worked out. All these took about eighteen months. The relevant couplets

from Nāṭya Sāstra were copied in Nāgari script, below each twin figure diagram.

Even in early sixties when I had started my research on the Karaṇās, it was as though there was a continuance of certain inherited knowledge from my previous birth, that I was ordained to proclaim for the first time, that each Karana sculpture is like a photograph of a moving dancer. I had felt the animation in stone and I was deeply convinced that the Karaṇās are movements and not mere static postures. I had recognized the skilfull usage of the four hands in the Śiva figures of Tanjāvūr, suggesting the animation of movements. I had stood stunned like stone for hours and days in that passage having Karana figures at the Brhdiśwara Temple at Tanjāvūr, with passionate juxtaposition of my spirit on those carvings, causing animation in them and a sense of recollection of the movements in me and the moments of distant past. To me, those sculptures are live with action, teaching the technique in silence, like Dakṣiṇāmūrti.

Through my guru Dr. T.N. Ramachandran readily saw the validity of my suggestion that the four hands denote animation, and thought that it is a break-through in the understanding of Karaṇās. The esteemed scholar Dr. V. Raghavan in his introduction to "Nr̥tta Ratnavali" opposed this theory as "not justified", without mentioning my name. Coming from a family of people involved in film making and with my brother V. Balakrishnan producing films with cartoon animation, it was perhaps natural for me to perceive animation in

stone. With this background, I evolved a new methodology for communicating the course of movements in stone at the Śatāra Temple. The twin figures became an advantage.

In all the panels at Satāra, Pārvati is shown with two hands, whereas Śiva is shown with four. The three pairs of hands are utilised to denote three stages of the respective Karaṇās. The posture of Devi and Śiva are also shown in progressive animation. All the 108 Karaṇās were designed, based on my practical experience of performing every one of them. I have transformed into reality, my dream of filling the gap between theory and practice that has existed from around the 15th century, as denoted by the phrase “Lakṣhaṇa Kakshya Viruddham” in works like Sangeeta Darpaṇa of Catura Damōdara. In the case of Karaṇās for which there are certain lacuna in details from the practical point of view, due to vagueness in the literature, sculpture and inscription, I have made bold to fill up those gaps through my designs. This has itself been an experience of living at a multi-level consciousness in multi-layers of time. It was not a mere intellectual exercise, but an amalgum of physical, intellectual and to crown it all, a spiritual phenomena of meditative nature. I owe this experience to Sage Bharata and Pūjyaśrī Mahāswāmi only.

Every line drawing was shown to His Holiness for his approval, before being handed over to the Sthapati for carving. There were questions to be pondered over before taking decision and debates within myself to be solved. Each of these had answers and clarifica-

tions from the Āchārya himself. For example, I had a doubt as to whether I should design Pārvati as performing the Karaṇa, Dandapādam or Vishṇukrāntam as lifting the leg up in consonance with the pre-13th century tradition that followed the Nāṭya Śāstra, or adhere to the mythology of later period, which speaks of Kālī being defeated by Śiva due to her inability - or more so because of impropriety, to lift up the leg as in Urdhva Tāṇḍava. Sitting in a cow shed and radiating wisdom and tranquility, the Āchārya commanded me to go back to the pre-13th century tradition. In his own inimitable style, he gave the decision after interrogating me for an hour, in the presence of certain other scholars and even priests from Chidambaram, who had by chance arrived there at that very hour with special Prasādam. His Holiness was a true controller of time, space and events. Those who have experienced the grace of this human God, know the magnitude of such situations of being subtly cross-examined by him, perhaps as a process of purification, as well as a proclamation to the world about the authenticity of the whole project.

The interest that Pūjyaśrī Mahāswāmi took in the Karaṇa project was too explicit. He made the young Bāla Swāmīgal, His Holiness Sri Śankaravijayendra Saraswati, the 70th Sankarāchārya of Kānchi Kāmakoṭi Peetham, to do the proof reading of the Samskrta couplets copied under the diagrams, before they were sent for being inscribed. Only after his scrutiny, they were turned into inscriptions on polished black granite by M/S Enterprising Enterprises, free of cost.

During those years of early 80's, when the designing work was going on, the Paramāchārya made a passing reference to Jāva, although he spoke at length about Bāli. I understood that I have been commanded by him to visit Jāva some time. The meaning of this got revealed to me only very recently in the latter half of 1994, after he had shed his mortal body. This revelation was an unexpected turn of events, leading to an experience of being a link beyond Time and Space. The unveiling of this bondage was without any preconceived notion; it was perhaps only pre-determined by the Mahāswāmi himself.

Recently I came across some dance sculptures in central Jāva at Prāmbanan, when I had gone to Indonesia for my concerts. I had a doubt that some of them may be Karaṇās of Nāṭya Śāstra. Meanwhile, an Italian scholar, Dr. Alessandra Iyer, who is a lecturer in archaeology in London came to me for guidance for her Post-Doctoral research on "Nāṭya Śāstra in the Far East with particular reference to Indonesia". She accompanied me and my brother Balakrishnan to Jāva where we have recently documented extensively, the dance figures at Prambanan.

I was able to identify fifty three sculptures as those of Karaṇās (not in serial order) as being performed by Lord Śiva. These are seen on the outer side of the balustrade of the main Śiva shrine in that gigantic temple complex. It was built in the 9th century, ie., about 150 years earlier than the earliest extant Karaṇa sculpture series known in India, at the Brhadiśwara temple at Tanjāvūr (early 11th c). Hence

from the point of view of dance history, these dance figures of Prāmbanan are extremely significant, particularly for our understanding of the magnitude of the percolation of Nāṭya Śāstra in Asia. The Prāmbanan temple got destroyed in an earth quake in the 15th century. From early this century, the Dutch archaeologists have been conserving the sculptures and slowly rebuilding. Hence, let us pray that the rest of the Karaṇa figures will also get unearthed. The Department of Archaeology, Government of Indonesia deserve all our congratulations for their enthusiasm and hard work.

When we returned, Dr. Alessandra Iyer wanted to casually see the photographs of the line drawings of my design for Satāra. She suddenly started bubbling with excitement when she found a few similarities between my design and those of Prāmbanan. So both of us sat for a serious study, when one Karaṇa figure after the other, opened our eyes to similarities, parallels and unbelievable oneness between my designs for Satāra and the figures of Prāmbanan. Finally all the available figures from Prāmbanan could be studied in close relation with my reconstruction of the 108 Karaṇas. Dr. Alessandra, who came through the British Academy and the Institute of Oriental Studies in London, is an Italian, deeply involved in research on South East Asia. Hailing from Italy, working in London, her perception of Far East had a link in India - the mid point between two opposite directions. This link happened to be my designs for Satāra. These drawings and carvings of the eighties of the 20th century

seems to have a technical and psychic affinity with those carvings of the 9th century found in central Jāva. What a “Link beyond Time and Space” ! She is now writing a book under this caption, comparing my reconstruction and showing the astonishing connections with Prāmbanan.

I view this “link” as a stamp of approval from the Divinity for the authenticity of my work. I deem it as an insight endowed perhaps by the predisposition of the very purpose of my life. Can I describe it as a pre-emption to revel in the experience of Nāṭya Śāstra, as a continuance from the dim past ? I am reminded of Dr. N. Mahalingam’s article. “Random Thoughts” on his visit to the Association for Research and Enlightenment Inc., (ARE) at Virginia Beach (USA), which kindled his eagerness to know more about the functioning of occult minds. He says: “Actually my researches on Kumari Kandam made me think that in the absence of archaeological evidence has been obtained for a link about which I did not know. How could there be such a tie with Prāmbanan for my mind? This miracle could not have happened, but for the choicest annointment of blessing by the Sage of this century, Pūjyaśrī Mahāswami of Kānchi. Obviously even twelve years ago, he could perfigure, or rather pre-determine a tie between my designs for Satāra and those of Prāmbanan.

Apart from this metaphysical perception, we must remember that this connection has its roots in the commonality of culture in Asia through the Nāṭyasāstra. “Śāstra” implies science and it does not

leave room for ambiguity. Just like mathematical calculations agreeing totally, when worked out correctly, my designs based on the text and commentary, has tallied with the earliest available series from another part of Asia. Let me confess, it was an unexpected turn of events. The link beyond time and space got unveiled without any pre-conceived notions. If Nāṭya Śāstra can reveal continental civilizational unity, what more proof do we need to establish its role in a much smaller area of our planet namely the Indian subcontinent ?





CHAPTER - IX

REVIVAL OF MARGI - THE NEED OF THE HOUR

The Nationalism and to some extent, Internationalism, met with in the Nāṭyaśāstra, is just not an artificial cementing of diversities or mixing up of styles; it is not even just an exaggeration of the glory of the past; it is not a mere integration of heterogeneous cultures, but a monumental living proof of a time immemorial "Unity in Variety" and not even "Unity in Diversity". It may be true that an awareness about this unity has been purposely eroded in the last 150 years. Many of the average English - educated Indians have been brain - washed with "Āryan and Dravidian Race Theories"; they have also inherited a general white skin complex from their immediate ancestors. This needs correction. They need help in regaining their self esteem - which has unfortunately been lost. Is it not the sacred duty of the fact of the common cultural ethos of timeless traditions ? It is unfortunate that knowledge of Nāṭyaśāstra started fading into the din and dust of ignorance. A sacred task of rekindling its spirit was started by Saint Vidyāraṇya five centuries ago. This itself was responsible for a cultural renaissance and causing fissiparous ten-

dencies, can surely be curbed through re-establishing the spirit of Nāṭyasāstra.

In the last four decades of post-Independence India, indefatigable workers in respective regions have contributed enormously in reviving and popularising the regional forms. Bharatanāṭyam was fortunate to be recognized first, followed by Kathakali, Manipuri and Kathak. Many more forms were re-discovered in the following decades. In the early fifties, when the Sangeeth Natak Akademi, New Delhi organised a National Dance Seminar, Hon'ble Chief Justice P.V. Rājamānnār expressed the view that the then relatively new nomenclature, Bharatanāṭyam was a misnomer, as it did not have a Nāṭya or a theatrical format. Another scholar had even suggested that the present Kathak is no more in the form of Katha or story telling and could be renamed as "Bharata Nṛityam". This term is what I am using to refer to my dance which I am now practising, performing and teaching. This proves that our post-Independence Indian Dance is still in a stage of transition.

Many regional dance styles have duly received attention. They are also evolving to suit the modern needs. Kuchipudi Nāṭya has already evolved as solo Nṛitya. The Bangalore dancers speak of a separate Mysore tradition. Within the framework of Bharatanāṭyam, Tamizhnadu has always claimed a handful of Paddatis, named after villages from which the Gurus hailed. The Kathak has sub-styles named after the residences of Gurus called Gharānās. There is equal

or more controversy with regard to the authenticity and antiquity of Manipuri dance. These diversities in opinion and differences in technique are perhaps illusory than real, for they are based on certain psychological preferences in regard to stress on varied aspects. For example, one gives importance to body line, another prefers rhythmic complexities, while yet another believes in an emotional involvement. Are they all not necessary? The regional discoveries along with some kind of intentional or unintentional bigotry of their multi-linear sub-styles have amply contributed to the swelling of regional glorification. To a considerable extent, this has been at the cost of a National outlook. In all these four decades, how much have we done on a National level to revitalise the Common Indian Psyche"? How many of us even realise that our country has had a common artistic base with a common aesthetic philosophy, binding the apparently varied observances? National Integration has been more often a slogan at speech level and it would continue to be so, till the inner layers of the mind to realize how immanent this unity has been for thousands of years.

Today, Indian dance is facing two dangers. One is the fanatic adhesiveness to the so called regional and residential norms, leading to become frogs in the well. The second danger is more harmful, for it is contrived creativity by aping the modern West. This would be ruinous to Indianness for the simple reason that generally modern occident does not believe in symmetry and proportion. Any contor-

tion cannot be accepted as dance from the point of view of Indian concept of beauty. Crookedness is believed to cause inauspiciousness including lunacy, disease and death. Unless our ancients knew the efficacy of good dance, it would not have been part of daily worship, in order to bring prosperity to society. Laws of symmetry and proportion are common to Indian dance, painting and sculpture. The purpose of these arts is said to be radiation of tranquility and hence creativity must flow from the fountain of the Indian philosophy of aesthetics. Now the question arises as to how do we expand regional frameworks through creativity and still be bound by Indianness? The answer is simple. For a forward thrust into this futuristic outlook, we need to turn the pages of greater antiquity in Indian dance history. This is an inevitable flash back.

It is a matter of fact that Mārgi works on music and dance have served as common texts for the entire Bhāratavarsha. The respective Deśis were also codified by the authorities. Sangeeta Ratnakara (12th c) records both “Mārgi” and “Deśi”. This was the last common text before the Northern and Southern streams of music got bifurcated. Commentaries for such texts came from all over India. For example, Sārṅgadeva, the author of Sangeeta Ratnākara was a Kashmirian who lived in South India. The commentary for his work came from Rājasthan, a few centuries later. This is only one example for the homogeneity found in the cultural history of India. Systematisation had always been for common benefit, particularly when they were

written in Samskr̥ta. History shows that Mārgi and Deśi lived together just as Samskr̥ta and the regional Prākrtās co-existed for centuries. We have revived the Deśis, and the need of the hour is to revive the common Mārgi.

We are now at a stage of dance evolution when common systematization is an immediate necessity for the following reasons:-

- 1) to regulate education of performing arts on a national level,
- 2) to expand the Deśis,
- 3) to explore creativity without loss of Indianness and
- 4) to create an awareness about the psychology of the Arts and the ethical responsibilities of the concerned groups towards the masses.

This new outlook based on ancient principles will also revitalise the common Indian root of aesthetics.

The National School of Dance which was proposed in the Dance Seminar in the early fifties was never started, if such an ideal school is opened with a common syllabus for Mārgi, branches could be opened all over the country with Mārgi being compulsory along with the respective Deśi lessons. The already existing Dance Institutions of National importance, can perhaps upgrade their syllabus by introducing the Mārgi. This would go a long way for artistes, in regaining a psychological affinity with even regions they had never

visited. An awareness about the common Indianness could easily revitalise the much dwindled common national self esteem and the common Indian psyche. The core of dance education must be based on common systematization of pedagogy in matters of mastering movements of major and minor limbs, concepts of movements in relation to time and space, and all this, with perfect mastery over laws of symmetry and proportion. The study of Nāṭyaśāstra is the only solution for this. This would reveal the genetic relationship between Mārgi and Deśi.

Respective Deśi forms have all come to light in the past decades. I was ordained to delve into the depth of Mārgi in the last thirty years of my research. Bridging the gap between theory and practice has been the goal of my life. It is with this desire that our “Nrthyodaya” has been organizing “Bharatiya Nāṭya Śāstra Siksha Camps” on an all-India level. The acquaintance with the scientific principles of Mārgi, helped the participants of various disciplines to understand, appreciate and perform their respective Deśi styles better. There was no danger to the styles and sub-styles they had already learnt.

My work is a humble dedication to our unparalleled world of Indian Culture. The result is what I offer in all earnestness - a common syllabus for reviving Mārgi Education for all the regional dancers, Irrespective of how it is received today, I have a deep sense of participation in history and a profound feeling of being a link

between the past, present and future.

CONCLUSION:-

To conclude, I would like to quote William James as quoted by K.S. Srinivasan.

“Any new Theory is first attacked as absurd; then it is admitted to be true but obvious and insignificant; finally it is seen to be so important that its adversaries claim that they themselves discovered it”.

It makes no difference as to who discovered it; if the act of discovery has been noticed, that would suffice. The basic Indian concept of knowledge in any field is defined as “सा वीद्या यया विमुच्यते” (Sā Vidyā Yayā Vimucyate), meaning “knowledge is that which liberates”. This was the foundation on which every śāstra, including the one on Nāṭya was developed. This unified approach to learning is diverse from the Western thought of dissection and specialization. Following the Western methodology may be scientific, but it has its own limitations. The Indian approach to knowledge unifies Man with the entire Cosmos. Then, where is the question of disintegration ? It is one single fullness - this is what we mean by “Pūrṇa” .



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